POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

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FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

FORCED ON THE BED AND STABBED TO DEATH.

(*See the Story of the Abbés Auriol and Boudes.*)

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The Heinous Sins of The Abbes Auriol and Boudes.

**"Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires."**
—POPE, "Dunciad."

"IT is a commonplace of psychological reflection of an elementary kind that from the moment a woman has abandoned herself to crime, she far exceeds in her capacity for evil the evilest of men." Thus Mr. H. B. Irving, one of the greatest of modern English criminologists, and what he says is perfectly true—a bad woman is almost the worst thing on earth. I say almost advisedly, for the worst of women is excelled in criminality by the priest who uses his cassock to cloak his evil deeds.

Fortunately, we have not to lament the existence of many clergymen who are real disgraces to their cloth, but it would be expecting too much if we were to believe that all clerics are spotless. The criminal priest has an attraction peculiarly his own; he brings to the commission of his enormities a trained mind which he has wilfully diverted from the path of rectitude, his habit of religion offers him exceptional opportunities for the commission of secret sins, while the sacred character of his office seems to add a zest to his wickedness which makes it fatally fascinating to him, and, alas! doubly difficult to detect. Fortunately, in England we have not to deplore the existence of many criminal clerks in holy orders, for the service of the Church in this land of ours is shorn of that most enticing of all allurements to the naturally bad man—power—and, consequently, none but the really earnest care to face the financial difficulties of the position or take upon them the onerous burden of a limited sacerdotalism.

Across the Channel, however, the service of God is occasionally allied with the service of the devil. Have we not records of the sins of the Borgias, which wicked family included a pope, most heinous sinner of them all? Do not we remember the consummate Riembauer, so skilfully depicted by Fuerbach? Mingrat and Contrafatto are known to the criminologist as types of the criminal cleric; the question of the innocence or guilt of the Abbé Bruneau is still hotly debated in America as well as in France, the land of his birth; and ranking with these monuments of wickedness we must place the two priests whose offences we are about to describe, the Abbés Auriol and Boudes. To neither can we give the palm for atrocity; each is a finished production by himself, equal in the enormity of their guilt, but differing widely in their methods. As a study in high-class crime, the lives of these two black sheep in the Church's fold are instructive; but one cannot help wondering why such men were ever permitted to take orders, for their mental attitude towards the sacred office they were about to assume, as well as their total unfitness for such office, must, in the very nature of things, have been known to a certain extent to their superiors.

Let us first take the case of the Abbé Auriol. The scene of his life is the east department of the Pyrénées-Orientales, on the extreme east of the borderland between France and Spain, a country the inhabitants of which are almost as much Spanish as French, and speak both languages indifferently well.

Joseph Auriol was born in 1852, and came of a criminal stock. Indeed, shortly after his birth, his father, Auriol père, was sent to prison by the assize court of the district for so long a term that an uncle named Garda was compelled to adopt the infant Joseph and bring him up as his own child. Garda had a farm near the town of Prades, and there the little Auriol was reared.

From the earliest Joseph Auriol showed great intelligence, and Garda thought that his ward would make an excellent schoolmaster, so he had the lad trained with that end in view. But Joseph was of an unstable disposition, and resented being forced to learn, so his uncle abandoned this scheme for his future, and permitted him to till the soil, intending later to make a farmer of him. When the lad was sixteen, however, an incident occurred which again upset his uncle's schemes. The Abbé Pompidor, a noted preacher, came to Prades and delivered a course of sermons there. Joseph Auriol attended, and was so struck with the power of the preacher, and pictured to himself the delights of being a famous abbé, able to move vast congregations by his word, and with every possibility of becoming a bishop in the future, that he then and there decided that he must be a priest, and follow in the great abbé's footsteps. His was no real conversion to God. What attracted him was the prospect of fame, of power.

Seeking out the Abbé Pompidor, young Auriol told him that he wished to enter the priesthood, and his intelligence rather struck the great preacher, who was on the look out for likely candidates for orders, and through his influence the heart of Garda was softened, and Joseph sent to the seminary at Prades. Then it was that Auriol found that, great as may be the possibilities of the priesthood, the preparation therefor is long and trying, and after a few months spent in the seminary, kept close at his books and religious exercises, he was heartily sick of the idea of being ordained, and entreated his uncle to let him return to the farm or enter the army. Garda was adamant; his ward had chosen his course in life, and he must stick to it. The priesthood or penury, that was the choice he offered him. Joseph pon-

dered over the situation. Poverty was hard, and, after all, the work of a priest did not seem so very arduous once the years of tuition were over. He had heard that Mass could be said in twenty minutes, the minimum time permitted by the rubrics, and from practice he knew that in an hour and twenty minutes he could gabble through the offices in the Breviary. To do that daily meant a life of certain respectability; if he did anything more, that would be a work of supererogation, and would be paid for accordingly. Auriol was tempted, and he succumbed.

It was not without making many struggles against his fate, however, that Joseph Auriol took upon himself the obligations of the ministry, for several times he tried to run away from the seminary to become a soldier, but each time he was caught by Garda and driven back to his beads and books. Nor was conscience entirely dead in the seminarist. He had his moments of fervour, when he prayed aloud in the chapel that he might be struck dead rather than become a faithless priest. His periods of exaltation were short-lived, however, and were succeeded by the determination to make his life as a nominal celibate as easy as possible. The ordination day came round, and Joseph Auriol left the cathedral a priest.

His first post was that of assistant curate at Prats-de-Mollo, where he remained for five years, during which time his fervour was cooling; still, he gave satisfaction to his rector, and in 1880, on the recommendation of that dignitary, he was appointed vicar of Nohedes, a remote village, lying in one of the deep gorges of the Pyrenees.

Now, at Nohedes the religious life of the village centred round two old maiden ladies of moderate wealth, named Rose and Marie Fonda. They were the Tabithas of the place, and their chief care in life was to see that Monsieur le Curé, the parish priest, was made as comfortable as possible. Everything that affection or forethought could suggest these two good old souls did for the vicar, and liberal were their offerings to their spiritual director. Rose was very stout, and suffered from heart trouble; Marie was thin, and terribly anæmic. Ill-health and good works filled their lives.

Needless to say, they were soon busy looking after their new curé, who was only twenty-eight years old, rather handsome, though inclining to stoutness, played the organ beautifully, Auriol's one real accomplishment, and who knew enough of medicine to sympathise with them in their various ailments. In a very short time Abbé Auriol had established a firm hold over the two maiden ladies.

Now that he was his own master, with only the bishop, who lived miles away, to criticise him, Auriol thought that a little relaxation might be indulged in with safety.

INSTEAD OF FLYING FROM TEMPTATION, HE SOUGHT IT.

Living in Nohedes was a young girl, twenty-two years of age, named Alexandrine Vernet. She was the mistress of the village school. She was comely, after rather a coarse fashion, wrote villainous poetry, and was exceedingly well versed in all the newest dirty literature. His duties naturally threw Auriol into contact with this dangerous siren, and it was not long before he found himself, to use his own words, "appalled by the passion which the sight of this young girl inspired in his breast." Now, Auriol had not the character which should go with the priesthood, and instead of flying from temptation he sought it; so that before long the scandal of the intrigue between the curé and the mistress was the talk of the village, and all recognised that their priest had fallen, save the two Misses Fonda, who would never listen to a word against their shepherd.

Before many months had passed the scandal became so notorious that it was thought advisable to remove Alex-

andrine to another mountain village some distance away, named Taurynia. But miles were as nothing to the lascivious priest. At nightfall he used to robe himself in a bandit's cloak, and, with a broad wideawake smuggler's hat, struggle over the rocky mountain paths to visit his love at midnight.

Being met early one morning returning to his parish, and asked what had taken him to Taurynia, he excused himself by saying that he had been to invite the mayor of that place to a funeral! Taurynia recognised the intimacy which existed between Auriol and Alexandrine, and, for prudence sake, the lovers changed their plans. They used to go by train to the town of Prades. The abbé would stand at the window of the carriage till the train started, preventing other people from entering; then,

Auriol was arrested.

once under way, he would strip off his cassock, and when he reached Prades he was effectually disguised as a farmer, with a false beard, a loud check suit, and a fat cigar. Every day his passion for Alexandrine Vernet grew more absorbing, and in the summer of 1881 he wrote to his uncle, begging him to give him the means to enable him to abandon his orders and fly into Spain with his mistress. Garda refused, saying that Joseph must remain a priest.

Soon his position became insupportable, and Auriol determined to get money from somewhere. He cast his eyes round, and they lighted on the persons of the two maiden ladies, who tended him with such fidelity.

In July the abbé was seen in the mountains gathering the roots of the poisonous hellebore. On July 18, after breakfasting with her sister and the abbé, Mdlle. Marie Fonda was seized with violent sickness, and within an hour she was dead, the good priest administering the last rites of the Church to her.

The season accounted for the rapid decomposition that set in, and the funeral was hurried on.

Barely a week had elapsed before Auriol took Rose Fonda to the office of a lawyer at Perpignan, where she executed a will, leaving all her property and all the money which her sister had left to the "holy priest, the Abbé Joseph Auriol."

In triumph, Auriol wrote to Alexandrine, telling her the good news, and adding that there was an epidemic of cholerine in his village. There was such an epidemic, certainly, and Auriol was kept pretty busy, but, for all that, he was in frequent attendance on Rose Fonda, who was really in a very delicate state of health. On August 30, the priest mixed a cup of tea for her, and twelve hours later she died in excruciating torments. Failure of the heart, due to her excessive stoutness, was the verdict of the doctor, whom the priest called in at the last minute. The body was hurriedly buried. Then the abbé appeared as the sole beneficiary under her will, and people began to talk, and their chatter became the more insistent when the priest sold up every scrap of property that the sisters had possessed, and, with 15,000 francs in his pocket, announced that he was about to take a short holiday in Spain.

Someone thought that this was suspicious, and wrote an anonymous letter to the police, and Auriol was arrested in Prades, whither he had gone to consult a lawyer. Once in the hands of the police, the abbé was searched, and 11,000 francs in notes were found on him, together with a phial of prussic acid. He made a violent attempt to destroy the latter, but the gendarmes were too sharp for him. So they were when on his way to the police-court on the following morning he made a dash for freedom, and actually managed to lead his guardians an exciting chase over several fields before he was secured.

Meanwhile, Alexandrine was waiting for him at Carcassonne, and when her beloved abbé did not appear she wrote to him, reproaching him with having betrayed her and left her. This letter fell into the hands of the authorities, who sought for her, but in vain. They learnt that the mistress had confessed all to the Abbé Daries, had asked to be received into a convent, and the next day had vanished from Carcassonne, and to this date her fate is a mystery.

Auriol's treatment at the hands of the magistrates was a little drastic. Every effort was made by the Juge d'Instruction to make him confess to the two murders, but the priest was firm and would not utter a word. Then the magistrate gave orders that solitary confinement should be tried, and for thirty-seven days the priest was shut up in solitude without even seeing the warder who pushed his food in through the door. That broke down his reserve, and he made a full confession in the presence of the Juge d'Instruction and a couple of Government officials. After acknowledging his guilt, the abbé starts a long series of apologies to his relatives for the disgrace he has brought on them, to the Church whose fair name he has besmirched, to the laity, to the clergy, to the law, to everyone under the sun whom he could think of. It was a very complete document which was taken down from his dictation, and to which he signed his name. That extracted from the accused, the case was ready to go to trial, but so long do the French courts take to move that it was July, 1882, before Auriol was placed in the dock at the Assizes to answer for his crimes.

To those accustomed to the dignity of a British court the procedure in a French court of law is extraordinary. The judge freely makes comments which would not be permitted in any other tribunal; he examines the prisoner, striving to force him to condemn himself, he bullies the counsel, he admits all sorts of vague statements made at random by anyone who feels inclined to attempt to do the prisoner an injury, and, as there is practically no cross-examination in French courts, the unsupported word of a single witness is generally believed, especially if no witness

on the other side swears to the contrary. The prisoner is not supplied with depositions, nor is there any rule that he should be informed even of the nature of the evidence which he is to be called on to controvert, so that it is impossible for him to call proper witnesses. Indeed, the ambassador who said that for a travesty of justice it would be hard to surpass the French Assizes was not very far from the mark. Certainly justice is sometimes done, but where there is any great prejudice against the prisoner the unfortunate man has not the slighest chance, were it not for the sudden fits which Gallic juries take of adding riders to their verdicts.

The trial of Auriol was notable for the terrible hostility of the presiding judge, who so far forgot himself as to abuse the accused, and when remonstrated with by the defending counsel to insult the whole of the French Bar. Indeed, at one moment the barristers were on the point of leaving the court in a body as a protest against the gross unjustness of the judge, and were only deterred from actually doing so by the threats of indictment hurled against them by the Procureur, who was supposed to be prosecuting, and who sat beside the judge and whispered hints to him throughout the case.

When questioned about his confession Auriol flatly denied that a word of it was true. "In accusing myself falsely," he said, "I was prompted by a mistaken form of reasoning. I believed that these lies would serve to expiate in the sight of God the immoralities that I had committed." Time and again Auriol repeated that he had only signed his confession because his mental state had been so broken down by the severity of the police, that he would have gone mad if he had not done something to save him from further solitary confinement. It looked as if the case was going to end regularly, when the Procureur had the malice to put into the witness-box a young man who had been a former lover of Alexandrine Vernet's and who notoriously hated Auriol. This man out of vengeance swore that a certain villager had fallen ill and a doctor was asked to bleed him. The patient was known to the abbé as a rival for the affections of Alexandrine. Hearing that the doctor had said that it would be fatal to bleed the sick man the curé at once advised that the patient be bled. This was done and the man died. "This," said the witness, "was done intentionally by the abbé, who wished to have his rival out of the way."

With this new story in their ears and with their minds filled with the details of the murders of the two Misses Fonda, the jury were dismissed to consider their verdict. They were absent for a very long time, and it was not till two o'clock in the morning of August 2 that they returned into court. This was to say that they found Auriol guilty of the two murders which were charged against him, and, marvel of marvels, they added that they found "extenuating circumstances!"

The effect of their finding was to prevent the judge from pronouncing sentence of death, for in French law if there are any circumstances in extenuation of the crime the full penalty cannot be awarded. It may also be added that a French jury need not be unanimous in finding a verdict, the decision following the majority.

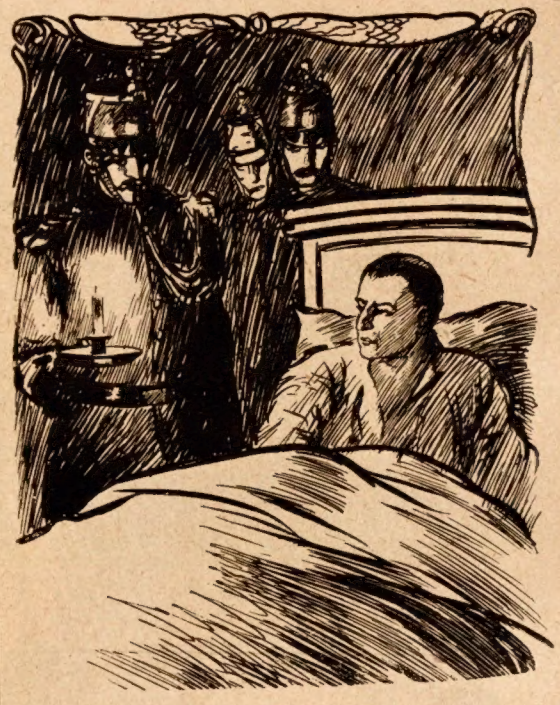
Auriol was dragged out of bed, whither he had retired, the judge was summoned from his hotel, and by the light of a number of candles Joseph Auriol was sentenced to be kept in penal servitude for the rest of his life on each separate charge. That was the most severe sentence which the judge could pass, for if he had sentenced him on the two counts taken together Auriol could have earned remission, but as each crime was to bear a separate punishment the convict would have to serve fifty-one years before he would be entitled to a ticket-of-leave, or to any material mitigation of the rigours of his punishment. Thus the priest who had murdered two people for a certainty to get money to flee with his mistress, and was possibly guilty of a third crime to remove an awkward rival, was taken off to gaol, and later sent to the Ile du Diable, there to linger out the rest of his days in the most degrading form of servitude.

And now we will tell of the misdeeds of the Abbé Boudes.

THE ABBE BOUDES.

Curiously enough, the district in which this wicked priest perpetrated the enormities which we are about to describe was quite close to the district in which Auriol committed the two murders for which he was sent to penal servitude for two life-times. The department in which this criminal cleric lived was that of Aveyron, directly to the north of the Pyrénées-Orientales.

He commenced his villainies rather earlier than did his colleague, Auriol, being born in 1830. Of his youth nothing important is known, for he does not figure before the world till the year 1855. In 1852 he entered the ecclesiastical seminary of Perigueux, desiring to make the priesthood his calling. He was not, like Auriol, forced into Holy Orders. On the contrary, the life of a priest attracted him. He had seen the respect with which the clergy were treated, and he thought that he would be satisfied to live all his days as the principal man in a village or small town. More than this, he was a man of gross passions and of great avarice, and he knew that, once clad in the garb of the priesthood, he could the better conceal his immorality, and, at the same time, could extort money from his flock. He went into his calling with the definite intention of being a bad priest.



He was dragged out of bed.

Those who knew him during his days as a seminarist never heard of him exhibiting the least inclination for religious exercises, and one cannot but wonder that he was ever permitted to pursue his studies for a position which he was obviously unfitted to fill.

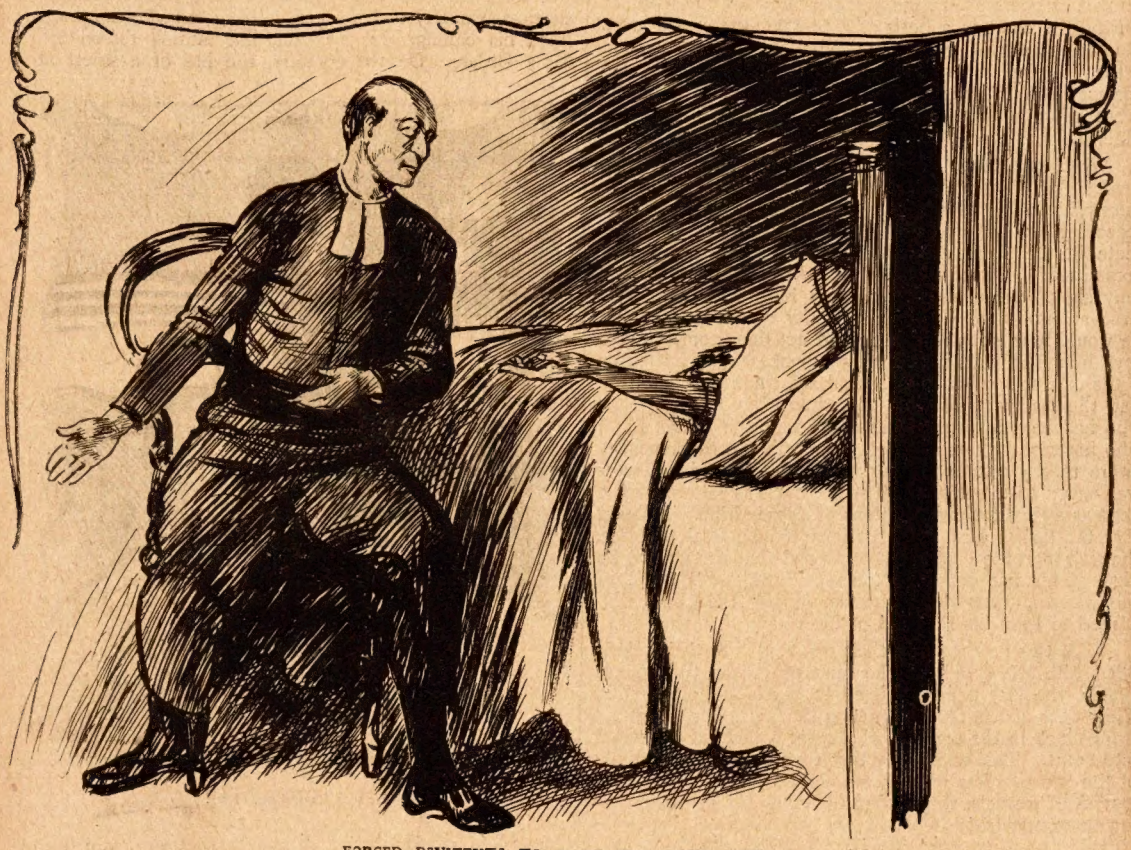
In 1855 the attention of the authorities of the Perigueux Seminary was drawn to a number of petty thefts which were of frequent occurrence, and a watch was kept. While the students were engaged in some recreation, a seminarist was seen to enter the sacristy and select from the drawers where spare vestments were kept a new cassock, which was kept in readiness for any passing priest who might need one. This the student put on, and then went into the

adjoining chapel. He seems to have had some lingering trace of respect left in him, for in his inspection of the altar vessels and ornaments he preserved the outward forms of reverence. After testing the candlesticks, he selected two which were of pure silver, in distinction to the others which were only plated. These he put on the floor beside the altar, and then rearranged the remaining candles, so that the two should not be missed. That done, he crammed the silver candlesticks into the pocket of his newly-acquired soutane, and was strolling out of the college gates, when he was stopped by one of the priests who had been watching him, and brought back.

He strenuously denied that he was wearing a cassock that was not his own, and vowed that he had never been in the chapel; but when he was told that he had been watched the whole time he was engaged in his operations, he unblushingly produced the silver candlesticks from his pocket and handed them to the rector. As a result of his theft, he was expelled from the seminary, and we are therefore surprised when we learn that in 1856, only a few months later, he was a member of another theological college. There he had almost completed his studies for the priesthood when he was detected in an act of the grossest immorality, and was again expelled. His name was sent round to all the neighbouring seminaries as a man to be refused admission, and it was thought that all chance of his ever wearing the vestments of a priest were at an end. Certainly the diocese of Rodez felt assured that M. Boudes would never be appointed to a curé within its limits.

Boudes disappeared for a couple of years, and then one fine morning turned up at the bishop's palace clad in the garb of a priest. He was recognised, and taken before my lord bishop, who was astonished to learn that Boudes was a fully-fledged priest, having been ordained by one of the Italian bishops. Questioned as to how he managed to obtain orders, Boudes admitted that he had been forced to practise a little deception, informing the bishop who ordained him that he had made all the necessary studies, but had been obliged, owing to family troubles, to leave his own seminary. He had then sought a distant diocese, and was anxious to be ordained so as to go out to the Foreign Mission field. Finding that the candidate had certainly been taught all that a priest should know of book learning, and believing his story, the simple bishop had housed him in his palace for eighteen months, in the course of which he had conferred all the necessary orders upon him, and then bidden him "bon voyage" to the Mission fields.

Boudes had immediately changed his mind, and returned to his own diocese, and as he had received his first tonsure at the hands of the Bishop of Rodez, that dignitary was bound to provide for him. Hoping that he was a reformed character, the good bishop appointed Abbé Boudes curate at Lagarde, placing him under the care of a very saintly old rector, who had charge of but a handful of people. Boudes had become a priest to further his career of crime, and he soon set to work to make the most of his position at Lagarde. Soon ugly stories began to reach the ears of his pious old rector. His curate had robbed his parishioners on their death-beds; he had used the confessional to extort money from his flock, and had forced penitents of his to make him their heir to the exclusion of their rightful successors; he had forced a dying man to hand over a large sum of money to him under the threat that unless he did so he would not give him the last rites of the church; and, more than this, he had seduced a number of young girls in the village, whom he was supposed to be instructing in religion, and had practised even more dreadful forms of immorality.



FORCED PENITENTS TO MAKE HIM THEIR HEIR.

By 1860 matters had come to such a pass in Lagarde that the saintly rector thought fit to remonstrate with his wicked curate, and he did so with tears in his eyes, telling him that unless he mended his ways he could not recommend him for promotion. The abbé listened, and then grew a little alarmed lest his chances of a parish where he would have more and richer folk to bleed should be lessened. So he decided to put a stop to the rector's chance of informing on him. Next morning he poisoned the chalice when the rector was celebrating Mass, and, but for the watchfulness of one of the choir boys, the good old priest would have been killed. The poison was traced to the abbé, but the rector was too kind-hearted to give information against him, and forgave him.

We next hear of the Abbé Boudes as curate of Viviers in 1865. There he procured the abortion of a young girl whom he had ruined, and when remonstrated with said that anything was better than that a priest should be proved to be the father of a child. Immorality did not matter provided that it was not made public. At Viviers he acted as a usurer and reaped a rich harvest out of his parishioners, whom he almost compelled to borrow from him. More than this, he forged several bills, cashed them, and then used the confessional to save himself from prosecution. The tailors in the neighbourhood grew tired of trying to get money for the numerous suits of clothes which the abbé ordered from them and which he sold to his clerical brethren. His rector he robbed of almost all his savings, and also emptied the poor boxes from time to time when he wanted a little ready cash. As a quack physician, too, he had a lucrative practice, his chief business being to induce the semblance of some serious disease in those who wished to escape military service.

By 1871 the abbé had made himself so notorious around Viviers that the bishop, to avoid open scandal, transferred him to Taurines as rector. There he continued his evil courses, practising forgery frequently and procuring abortion whenever he found it advisable to do so, or whenever a parishioner paid him sufficiently well for him to take the risk. His money-lending operations in Taurines, too, were very successful, and before long he had almost the whole of his parish under his thumb. Theft he made rather a speciality of, and even went to the length of visiting a neighbouring parish and stealing the sacred vessels from the altar. Objects of value were not always the things that appealed to him. Sometimes he would steal for the very love of it, as for instance, when he stole a plough, an object which he had no earthly use for, and which he made no attempt to sell.

Soon his behaviour grew so flagrantly evil that the bishop was appealed to, and instead of removing the offending priest he wrote him a long and affectionate letter bewailing the infirmities of his dear brother, and entreating him to mend his ways. In reply he received a furious letter from the abbé, in which the curé declared that he had no idea that he had done anything wrong, and wanted to know of what he was accused. Then the bishop wrote again, saying that the parishioners had begged him to remove the rector, and detailing a long list of offences, many of them purely disciplinary, which were alleged against Abbé Boudes. The most serious of them all perhaps was the attempted violation of a girl of thirteen, whose screams had fortunately brought her mother on the scene in time to save her child from ruination. The abbé was also charged with arson, and with threatening to set on fire the houses of those of his parishioners who would not pay the extortionate sums which he demanded from time to time as "Church dues."

In the end the bishop begs his offending curé to resign his living and leave the neighbourhood. He does not, however, insist that the wicked priest should give up his comfortable and profitable post, but merely suggests that to save his own soul he should seek fresh fields for his nefarious enterprise.

Boudes was not at all inclined to do so, and wrote to the bishop saying that he had not the least intention of leaving Taurines until he was appointed to a better parish. The bishop was grieved, and laid the letter on one side, being too weak to take any action.

In 1875, however, he had good cause to regret his weak-mindedness. On the night of the 1st of March in that year the Abbé Alvar, the priest of the parish of Saint Circq, adjoining Taurines, was found dead in his bed. The body was bathed in blood and covered with knife wounds, and the scratches of a human nail. On the shoulder was the imprint of a bloody hand. Horrified, the parishioners called in the police, and it was found that the safe in which the abbé had recently placed some money which had been collected for repairing his church had been broken open and the contents stolen.

The murdered priest's sister, who lived with him, de-

"That's the Abbe Boudes!"

clared that two men with blackened faces had entered the house by making a hole through the wall underneath the dining-room window. The burglars had gone up to the priest's bedroom, and a frightful struggle had ensued. After a fierce resistance her brother had been forced on to the bed and was then stabbed to death. As soon as he was dead the two robbers had chased her, and she had fled from the house, pursued by one of the miscreants, the other having returned to the house to open the safe. The poor woman had only saved herself by falling into a deep chasm, where she had remained until daybreak. As a result of her terrible experience the woman lost her reason.

Inquiry proved that the Abbé Boudes had been away from home on the night of the crime in company with a man of very suspicious character, and suspicion pointed to

the wicked priest as one of the two murderers. Unfortunately the abbé learnt that he was supposed to have been implicated in the crime, and he bolted from his parish, and was not caught till July 28, when he at once pretended to be mad, and was consigned to the asylum at Montpellier.

There he remained for ten years, being under observation the whole time. Some idea of his cunning and real genius can be gathered from the fact that he simulated madness for that space of time so well as to deceive the doctors who were experts in mental cases. At the end of ten years the abbé calmly told one of the keepers that he was not mad, but had only simulated insanity so as to pass the time which the French law lays down as that after which no prosecution can be made. He freely admitted that he had killed Alvar, but said that now the ten years were up he could not be charged with that offence. Unfortunately his knowledge of French law was only too accurate.

Then he bribed one of the warders with some of the murdered abbé's gold to assist him to escape, which he managed to do in 1886, and shortly afterwards appeared in Tarn, as an Alsatian priest, calling himself Father Jean Marie. He soon became recognised in the diocese of Tarn as an able man, and was appointed professor in the college of Ste. Marie, at Albi, the chief town of the department. As a professor he was guilty of innumerable unnatural offences, which cannot be referred to here.

As may be imagined, the Father Jean Marie was not long in recommencing his old schemes for getting money. Among his pupils was a lad named Calmels, who lived with his grandmother, an old lady of considerable wealth, who dwelt on her property at the neighbouring Château Pendaries. Jean Marie saw that by the exercise of a little tact he could make himself the master of the fine château, and he set to work to earn it. His first step was to make a special friend of the lad, and before long he was regarded by the simple boy as the embodiment of all that was good and clever. Then he was taken out to the Château Pendaries and introduced to the grandmother. She speedily fell under the spell of his fascination, and readily listened to all that the witty professor had to say. Little by little he strengthened his hold on the old lady and on the lad, until at last he persuaded the old woman to sell him her beautiful property, valued at over eighty thousand francs, for a paltry and totally inadequate sum. She did so believing that she was benefiting the Church, and went to live in apartments in Albi.

Thus far Father Jean Marie had prospered, but he was just getting settled in the château when he had to fly. A young woman from Taurines, whom he had ruined under the pretext of preparing her for confirmation twelve years previously, happened to pass through Albi, and was shown the learned and pious Professor Jean Marie.

"Why, that's the Abbé Boudes!" she exclaimed.

The abbé overheard her, and thought it advisable to fly at once, for he was not quite certain whether some of his more recent sins might not come to light. However, after a day or two in hiding, he decided that it was a false alarm, and he returned to his newly acquired property. There he made a miscalculation. News of his identity reached the relations of the old lady Calmels, and, desirous of having Château Pendaries for themselves, they went to the police and told them where they could lay hands on the Abbé Boudes if they wished to do so.

Of course, as an escaped lunatic, they could arrest him at any moment, and a party of gendarmes went out to the château to capture the erring priest. The abbé saw them coming, and fled. The officers rushed after him, and after a long stern chase managed to seize him. Then he broke down. "Kill me," he cried to his captors. "Empty your revolvers into my head. You will be doing me a service."

But the gendarmes wanted him alive, and he was dragged off to prison, where he was kept till December 19, 1889, when he was brought up for trial.

While in prison awaiting his trial, he wrote to his old friend the Bishop of Rodez, and perhaps his letter gives as good an insight into his character as anything can do. Here it is:

> "Monseigneur,—Behold me in Rodez Prison, and about to appear before the Assize Court. I am none the less innocent of the charges laid against me.
>
> "It is not I, I swear before God, who killed the curé of Saint Circq, and, if I did, I cannot be convicted, or even accused of the crime, since it is covered by prescription.
>
> "They can, then, accuse me of nothing save a few trifling peccadilloes which I hardly remember.
>
> "I should be extremely obliged and grateful, monseigneur, if you would come and see me, or at least send your secretary.
>
> "When I have been acquitted by my judges—and I am absolutely certain that I shall be—my one and only desire is to withdraw myself into the privacy of a monastery, forgotten of all men, and where I may, for my part, forget them."

The object of this extraordinary letter was to prevail on the good bishop to plead before the court that, as the priest wished to enter a monastery, he should be acquitted and permitted to do so, a course often taken with erring clerics when their crimes are not too heinous.

But the abbé had at last worn out the patience of the bishop, and Monseigneur of Rodez refused to have anything more to do with his tormentor. Consequently, the Abbé Boudes was haled before the judges, expecting only to be charged with escaping from an asylum. What was his disgust, then, to find that particular inquiries had been made into his life at Albi, and a host of the most horrible crimes were laid to his charge. More than this, in order to prejudice the jury against him, the prosecution brought up a list of as many of the abbé's "peccadilloes" as they could make in the short time at their disposal, some trifling catalogue of four hundred serious offences, and these were all fully described to the jurors.

The only charge which could be heard in open court was that of unduly influencing the old Madame Calmels and getting her property from her by false pretences. All the revolting offences were heard in camera, consequently, it came as a surprise to the public when the doors of the court were again opened and the verdict of guilty returned, to hear the presiding judge order the Abbé Boudes to be imprisoned and kept in penal servitude for the rest of his life.

The abbé was staggered by the severity of his punishment, but there is not the slightest doubt that he and Auriol should both have perished at the hands of the executioner, and if they had been tried in England their names would have been inscribed on the Hangman's Register.

Can anyone now deny to Auriol and Boudes a place in the catalogue of scoundrels who have been disgraces to their sacred calling, and who have done serious harm to morality by their frightful hypocrisy?

A Maniac's Terrible Fight.

In Charente Inferieure (France) a terrible incident took place in 1874.

The police of Gernozac were informed that a madman had shut himself up in a lonely house, from whence he fired upon the passers-by. The brigadier, accompanied by two gendarmes, went at once to arrest him. They found the madman by his door, armed with a double-barrelled gun. He warned them that if they approached he would fire, and did so, breaking the brigadier's wrist and blinding one of his men. The other, supposing him now disarmed, sprang forward, and received a revolver bullet in his heart. Summoned by telegraph, all the magistrates of the neighbourhood arrived, with the captain of gendarmes and a large force of policemen. All day long the siege lasted. Shut up in his house, the madman dared any to approach, firing at the least movement. Towards four o'clock on December 31, seeing that another brigadier had lost his life, and a neighbour severely wounded, the magistrates ordered fire to be put to the house. It was done, but the poor maniac would not yield, and he was actually burnt alive.

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER XLI. (Continued.)

NOW you come to the point. Why I heard the scream, and thought murder was being committed, so I dropped out of the trap and made for the old red house. Then I seed you and the bobby a strugglin'; so I ups and gives him one for himself, and the best thing for both on us to do now is to take a circumbendibus route to London—not but what I think we shall be able to dodge 'em. I've got as pretty a little tit in this 'ere cart as any man need wish to drive."

"Hang it, but you are a jovial fellow, Bill, after all," said Peace, "and I shall never forget this kindness."

They had by this time emerged from the narrow lane and were proceeding along one of the high roads.

A mounted patrol who was coming in the opposite direction regarded them with an inquiring and suspicious look.

The gipsy, who was driving, slackened his speed and wished the officer "good night"

The greeting was returned, not in a very cordial manner, however.

"I thought he meant mischief," said the gipsy. "It was quite a toss up whether he overhauled us or not. What have you got in that bag?"

"Something I shall be glad to get rid of. Silver plate, with names and dates engraved on it."

"Oh, scissors, that's awkward! We should be done brown if any of the bobbies did overhaul us."

"If you have any fears, don't hesitate for a moment. Drop me, and I'll take my chance."

The gipsy laughed.

"No, no, old man!" he cried. "In for a penny in for a pound, is an old saying. We'll take our chance. I ain't going to desert a pal, or turn tail like a cur."

He drove on at a sharp trot, and reached London in safety; dropping Peace at the corner of Leather Lane, he promised to give him a call in a day or two, then, wishing him good-night, he drove off.

Our hero let himself in with his latchkey, and after washing the colour off his face, and attending to other business matters, he turned in for the night, and slept soundly till the morning.

CHAPTER XLII.

As may be imagined, there was a rare hue and cry, both at Highgate and the adjacent neighbourhood, for some days after the burglary at Miss Chickleberry's establishment for young ladies, and as a natural consequence the facts of the case lost nothing in the hands of the gossips who recounted the terrible outrage.

The schoolmistress herself was said to be at death's door, in consequence of the brutal treatment she had received at the hands of the ruffian who had so mercilessly attacked her.

The valiant policeman was also seriously injured, and the amount of property stolen was, of course, enormous.

Notices were sent to the several metropolitan police stations, and all that could possibly be done to trace the robber was at once set on foot.

Meanwhile, Peace was quietly working at his trade in Leather Lane.

He had, on the following day, disposed of the plate to a Jew fence in Whitechapel; the watches he secreted in the premises he occupied.

He had effected so complete a change in his personal appearance that it was hardly possible for anyone to recognise him as the man who had carried out so daring a robbery; indeed, the policeman into whose arms he ran when making off from the premises had but a transient glance at him; his impression was that he was a mulatto, and he was so described in the "Hue and Cry."

This in itself would have been sufficient to put the detectives on the wrong scent, and thereby to defeat the ends of justice. Peace did not stir out from his workshop, save in its own immediate neighbourhood, for some days; and no one for a moment suspected that the quiet, mild-spoken, industrious artisan of Leather Lane was the real culprit.

A week or two passed over, and the burglary at Highgate became a thing of the past; at the expiration of which time Peace committed more burglaries in a different neighbourhood. These were on a minor scale, but he contrived to escape detection.

By these, together with the Highgate robbery, he managed to amass a considerable sum.

About this time crowds of persons were flocking to the Crystal Palace to witness the performance of the renowned Blondin, the hero of Niagara, as he was termed in the posters and advertisements. There never was a greater furore displayed by sightseers of the metropolis and elsewhere than on this occasion.

Blondin was the "lion" of the day, now he is a very lamb—equally as clever, it must be admitted, as when he first came in our midst, but the novelty has worn off, as the novelty wore off some years before with Van Ambrugh.

Peace, who was a lover of daring deeds and adventure, perhaps more than anyone else, could not leave London without seeing the prince of rope performers. He therefore determined upon paying a visit to the Palace at Sydenham.

He was not a man easily moved to terror, but it has been said, and it would be useless to attempt to gainsay it, that somewhere deep down in the human heart there is a corner devoted to the instinct of horror.

This fact has been evidenced at all times and in all ages, and although the world is said to have grown more civilised since the days of gladiatorial exhibitions in ancient Rome, when gaily dressed ladies placidly witnessed a man being devoured by wild beasts, the love of the horrible still remains.

Blondin, when he first came into this country, revived in the British breast the old feeling of the Romans in the circus.

His daring deeds on the high rope, which, to say the truth, were appalling to witness, drew a greater concourse of people to the Crystal Palace than any other has done either before or since.

He was the rage. Tens of thousands of wondering eyes were riveted on him as he performed such dexterous feats on the rope. People were fascinated as they watched the acrobat play with the chance of death at such a dizzy height.

We are a Christian people, much given to church and chapel going, and it would be a rank heresy therefore to say that our natures would revolt at the sight of a martyr bound to a stake.

Happily, the days are over for such an exhibition. The days are past also for bull baiting, badger baiting, cock fighting, and even for fistic contests.

Nevertheless, we expect human nature is much the same as it was hundreds of years ago.

It is true we stick a silk hat upon our heads, and put an eyeglass on one of our orbits, and disguise the ladies of our family in pull back gowns and high heels; the love of the horrible is not even scotched, much less killed.

A Christian company sit and stand about the floor and galleries of some great building ostensibly devoted to the arts, to see the wonderful Zazel flirt with the King of Terrors.

They watch the graceful creature shot from a cannon, holding their breath as she flies through the air and alights safely in the net.

Then the poor girl, carrying her life in her hand, in obedience to the bond of service with her worthy master, walks along a wire, as high from the earth as a low cloud in a hilly country, in peril of imminent death.

We do not pay to see the clever manner in which Zazel balances herself, because, if the feat were performed at a lower and safer altitude, there would be few, if any, spectators.

And this will apply with equal force to Blondin. His per-

formances on the low rope were much more graceful and difficult, but they were not so popular as his high-rope feats.

It is the element of danger, and the probability of an accident which gives piquancy to the exhibition.

It has been said that a gentleman of independent means attended for years Van Ambrugh's exhibition of wild beasts, in the full expectation of seeing him one day devoured by one of the savage animals.

Some years ago, when a travelling blacksmith murdered six persons at a lonely habitation at Denham, the lane leading to the scene of the tragedy was thronged with the carriages of the nobility, the occupants of which offered large sums to the policeman in charge of the house for permission to see the dead bodies as they had fallen when struck down by the hands of their murderer.

The gate-post at the entrance was probably cut away by persons who possessed themselves of a piece of the same as a trophy or memento of the tragical event.

In fact, the hitherto unfrequented lane leading to the house presented the appearance of Rotten Row on a summer afternoon, so thronged was it with carriages and equestrians.

Who, therefore, will deny that the instinct of horror does not still exist?

If this were not so, what would become of our acrobats, our sword swallowers, fire-eaters, and fire kings?

Peace, before setting out from Leather Lane, made as great an alteration in his personal appearance as possible. He had cultivated a moustache and imperial; he dressed himself in a long black coat of the clerical type, put on a white tie also of the clerical pattern, and stuck on his head a felt hat. An eyeglass completed his transformation, which was so perfect as to defy recognition.

Taking his ticket at Blackfriars, he was whirled down to the palace with all convenient speed. He found the place thronged with gaily dressed people; it appeared as if all London had turned out, as by common consent, to do homage to the hero of Niagara.

Most of us know what the Crystal Palace was at this time. If you desired to meet with a few of your friends, people you had missed sight of for a given space of time, you had only to go there; somebody would be sure to recognise you and claim your acquaintance.

Peace, who now paid a visit to the palace for the first time, was delighted with the attractive nature of its most noticeable and leading features. Apart from the world-renowned Blondin, he found numberless objects of interest to engage his individual attention.

He passed from court to court, examining objects displayed therein with an eye of a connoisseur.

He always found great pleasure in contemplating works of art, whether ancient or modern; and, although but little versed in history, he would linger lovingly over any choice or rare specimen of art workmanship of a bygone age.

This, indeed, was one of the many strange contrarieties of his character, which would lead us to the conclusion that he was destined by nature to cut a more respectable figure in the world than that which is but too plainly evidenced by his lawless career.

While in the Pompeian Court somebody addressed him by name.

He looked up and beheld Brickett, the landlord of the Old Carved Lion.

"Ye be looking at the wonders of this grand place all by yourself," said Brickett, clapping his friend on the shoulder.

"Well, who would have thought of seeing you?" returned Peace. "I thought you never moved half-a-league's distance from the old inn."

"Neither do I, as a rule, but I've been obliged to come up to London about a little matter, so I thought as how I'd just see this wonderful rope-dancing chap; but I go back agen to-night."

"Ah, well, I'm jolly glad to see you, Brickett."

"The same as regards yourself," returned the landlord; "but I s'pose you haven't cut us entirely? There's lots of people inquiring after you, and good people, too, who want to know when you are coming back. There's plenty of work for you, mind that, when you do return."

"All right; we'll see about it in good time. How does his lordship get on with his newly-found relative?"

"So well, I hear, that he's not disposed to part with her—not upon any consideration. She's tumbled into a good thing, and no mistake; but, lord, she is a sweet creature—a lovable creature." Peace sighed.

"Yes," he answered sadly, "she is, so I've been told."

"And let us hope she'll be a comfort to the old man—indeed, I'm sure she will."

"No doubt."

"And she ought to be thankful to you—so I've heard."

Peace made no reply.

"So I've heard," continued the landlord. "It's only what I've heard."

"Maybe she has," returned Peace carelessly. "People in this world soon forget those who have rendered them a service; but let that pass. She's the earl's granddaughter, I suppose, and it is not at all likely she'd care to remember or recognise me."

"Ah!" ejaculated Brickett, looking hard at his companion, "I suppose not."

There was a murmur from many voices and a shuffling of feet.

Blondin was about to go through his performance on the high rope.

Peace and Brickett left the Pompeian Court, and took up the best position they could to witness the hero of Niagara go through his marvellous feats.

The worthy host of the Carved Lion stood spell-bound with astonishment.

He declared he had never seen anything like it in his life, and that it quite surpassed his expectation.

Peace was of the same opinion.

When Blondin had finished the two made their way to one of the refreshment-bars, and had some cold meat and ale, which Brickett would insist on paying for, after which he bade our hero a hasty adieu, saying that he had to catch the train which was to take him down to Broxbridge.

Before parting he was very profuse in his protestations of friendship, and then he extorted a promise from Peace that he would very shortly pay another visit to the Carved Lion.

"He's a rare good sort," murmured our hero, after Brickett had taken his departure; "one of the best and most cheery of landlords I ever met with."

Having given expression to this sentiment, Peace sat down at one of the side tables in front of the refreshment-bar, and was for some time apparently lost in thought.

People passed to and fro, but he was so abstracted as to be heedless of all that was passing around.

It was singular, but it was nevertheless true, that the very name of the village of Broxbridge or the remembrance of its associates seemed to have a depressing effect upon him.

He liked Brickett, and to a certain extent liked also many of those who frequented the parlour of the "Lion," and he had been fortunate and prosperous while in the village; but, despite all this, perhaps the very last thing he would think of would be paying it another visit.

Peace was of a jealous disposition. He could not bear to think of his treatment at the hands of the girl Nelly.

In addition to this another, and a higher order of female, had in an earlier day treated him with scorn.

Aveline Maitland, to whom he had made honourable proposals at Sheffield, had cast him on one side to become the wife of his old schoolfellow, Tom Gatliffe.

By an exceeding strange concurrence of circumstances, he had been attracted to the village in which Nelly dwelt, and, indeed, where she had been born and brought up.

This was his reason for hating the very name of Broxbridge, and at the bottom of his heart sat despair and humiliation.

He bitterly regretted ever having given the information which led to the recognition of Aveline as a descendant of the Earl of Ethalwood.

But it was useless to repine now that the past could not be recalled.

Bad man as Peace was, these circumstances were active agents in hurrying him on in his lawless career. In a great measure they rendered him callous and reckless.

He took a jaundiced view of life, and became the hardened and unscrupulous criminal, whose daring exploits have so astounded his fellow-countrymen.

We do not offer these observations in palliation of his guilt, for, to say the truth, there was never much good in the man.

But, at the same time, it is a fact which is incontrovertible that circumstances in a great measure create criminals, even as they do heroes.

After ruminating for awhile Peace rose from his seat and strolled into the grounds attached to the palace. He saw many things there which were of sufficient interest to dispel the gloomy thoughts which a few moments before had taken possession of him.

He met at the ornamental gardens one or two persons with whom he was acquainted. The society of these afforded him some relief, as the current of his thoughts was directed in a different direction.

He became all of a sudden gay and festive, and again had recourse to one of the refreshment-bars.

It may have been observed by the reader that the Crystal Palace is a thirsty place, or rather a place which creates thirst. Anyway, a very fair amount of liquids of various sorts is consumed therein.

But a surprise which was perfectly overwhelming awaited our hero, who, after parting with his companions, sauntered about in a most desultory manner.

All of a sudden his eyes were attracted to one of the first-class refreshment-rooms.

He could hardly credit his senses.

At one of the tables in the room sat a young and beautiful female, dressed in the height of fashion.

Her arms, head, and bust glittered with jewels.

Her costume was perfection.

Peace thought he had never beheld any woman so elegantly dressed, or one possessed of so aristocratic an appearance.

Could he be deceived? Was he dreaming or awake? The features of the female were familiar to him.

could be no doubt about it—she was Bessie Dalton; but, oh, how changed!

He had known her only as a chrysalis—now she was a butterfly with gaudy wings.

He walked boldly up to the table by the side of which she was seated, and exclaimed in a hissing whisper:

"Bessie!"

The young woman looked up, and said carelessly, "Oh, it's you—eh? Well, you are a stranger."

"And whose fault is that?" cried Peace, as he shook her jewelled hand which she held forth. "Whose fault is that?"

"Ah, that would not be so easy to say, if there is a fault."

"What is the reason for you not acknowledging any of my letters? You've served me nicely; leaving Bradford without letting me know where you had gone, you and Mrs. Bristow. Now I have met with you I mean to know all about your movements."

"Do you?"

"Yes, I do," said Peace resolutely, and with something like anger in his tone.

THRUST THE CAKE OF SOAP INTO HER MOUTH.

"It cannot be!" he ejaculated. "I must be mistaken. And yet the likeness—the similitude—is most remarkable; but, Lord bless me, it never can be her!"

He paced backwards and forwards for some little time, not knowing very well how to act

To the first-class refreshment-room aforesaid his attention seemed to be attracted.

He kept advancing towards the door, peeping in and then retreating again, but he found it impossible to leave the spot.

He was under the impression that the elegantly-dressed female tricked out in such gaudy costume was none other than the long-lost Bessie Dalton.

And yet she was so completely metamorphosed in every way that he had some doubts as to her identity.

Possibly he was mistaken.

But he could not leave the palace without satisfying himself upon the subject which so deeply concerned him.

He passed through the doorway into the refreshment-room and strolled on till he came in front of the elegant young female, who looked like one of the first ladies in the land.

He gazed at her in both surprise and admiration. There

"Well, you see, my dear fellow," said Bessie, in a languid tone, "there were many reasons for our leaving, and as there were also many reasons for our preserving our incognito I was not able under the circumstances to write a farewell letter to you, and have now to apologise for my seeming neglect, which, I assure you, was not wilful."

Peace was perfectly astounded.

The easy self-assurance of the woman proved that she was evidently no longer the same in manner and ideas as he had known as a factory hand.

He was perfectly astounded, and, to use a nautical phrase, was completely taken aback.

"You've used me badly enough," he exclaimed, "and as far as your apologies are concerned they are not worth a rap. Where did you and Bristow's wife fly to? They told me at the house that you gave out you were going abroad."

"Certainly we did. We wished it to be understood that such was our intention."

"But you never had an idea of leaving this country."

"Certainly not; you are quite right in your surmise. We never had an idea of leaving the shores of England; but you

see, Peace, there were special reasons for our wishing it to be understood that we had left the land of our birth. You see, we sought concealment—this was not so important, as far as I was concerned, but with Mrs. Bristow the case was different. There was an imperative necessity for her to seek seclusion; this she has found, poor thing, and her life, I am happy to say, is now one of unclouded sunshine."

"Sunshine be ——!" cried Peace. He was about to make use of an oath, but the lady held up her fan, and by an effort he restrained himself.

"Look here, my lady," he cried, after a pause. "You're coming it pretty strong. You've got fine feathers and make use of fine words, but don't you think you can deceive Charles Peace. I can see through you, for all your affected airs and graces. You've got an admirer—are under the protection of a gentleman, I suppose. Eh?"

"I must request you to be a little more cautious," said Bessie, perfectly unmoved. "In the first place, you must not address me in language which is in every way objectionable. Our paths in life are as dissimilar as is possible for two persons to be. I have been long since shunted—to make use of an expressive simile—on to a different line to yourself, and I must request you to keep your place, as I shall keep mine. I wish you well, entertain the most friendly feelings towards you as far as your own happiness and welfare are concerned, but for the rest—for the rest," she observed, conveying a spoonful of strawberry ice-cream to her lips, "we are separate and apart."

Peace was indignant beyond expression; he had the greatest difficulty to restrain himself from striking the speaker.

"If you give me any more of your cheek," he cried, in a hissing whisper, "I'll slap your face."

"You had better not, Mr. Charles Peace," said his companion; "upon my word, you are sadly forgetting yourself."

"What do you mean, you stuck-up, conceited little hussy, by treating me in this way? Separate and apart, indeed! I'll soon teach you a lesson about that, my lady. Where do you live?"

"I decline to answer your question; and, indeed, if you do not behave yourself better, I shall decline to have anything further to say to you. I wish you well, and don't bear any animosity towards you; but at the same time must beg you most distinctly to understand that I am not disposed to submit to taunts or insults from anyone—still less from you."

"I am not going to let you off so easily," said Peace. "It's no use you endeavouring to ride the high horse with me. I intend to know where you live, and, in addition to this, I am determined to know all about you."

"Are you?"

"Yes, I am."

"Then you'll have to find out as best you can; for I must tell you frankly that you will have no information from me."

"Do you suppose, you little fool," exclaimed Peace, in a voice of concentrated passion, "that I am going to let you have it all your own way—that I'm going to give you up now I have found you? If you do, you are greatly mistaken."

Bessie Dalton made no answer, but continued to help herself to the strawberry-ice before her. Her self-possession—her refinement and graceful deportment—fairly astonished her companion.

"Do you hear me?" he cried.

"I cannot fail to do so," she answered, "seeing that you speak vehemently."

"Will you write down your address?"

"Most certainly I will not."

"Then I'll follow you, if it's for twenty miles. You shall not escape me."

"There must be an end to this, Mr. Peace," said Bessie Dalton, in an altered tone. "Your words and manner are most objectionable, and I must decline to have any further converse with you."

"You decline?"

"Most emphatically. Be good enough not to trouble me any further. Our interview is at an end, and I must request you to leave, or, at any rate, not to press your society on me."

"Did anyone ever hear of such audacity?" exclaimed Peace, in a perfect fury. "Where do you live, and what are you doing? Don't toss your head! I must and will have an answer."

"Once more I tell you not to interfere with me," cried Bessie. "I do not choose to hold further parley with you. As one whom I knew some long time ago I have been courteous enough to exchange a few words with you. Now I wish I had not done so, for your tone and manner cannot be considered otherwise than offensive in the eyes of any well-bred person. I therefore request you to leave, as I do not choose to be subject to your insults."

"Insolent minx!" exclaimed Peace, seizing the speaker by the wrist, which he grasped with an iron grip. "You shan't escape me—you have played me false; you have been carrying on a nice game, without doubt. I swear by the Lord above us that I will not leave till you have told me."

As he gave utterance to this speech he shook her angrily, and grasped her wrist with such force that the bracelet she wore was forced into her flesh and produced acute agony.

She gave utterance to a slight scream, and called for assistance. One of the waiters of the establishment who heard the angry altercation beckoned to a stalwart policeman who was near the entrance, who at once came forward. Peace's countenance wore at this time a most diabolical expression.

"What is the matter, madam?" inquired the constable, in a respectful tone.

"This man is both threatening and annoying me. In the absence of my friends and relations, who are in the grounds, but will return shortly, I am constrained to appeal to you for protection."

"Certainly," returned the policeman. "Now, then," he said sharply, addressing himself to Peace; "you be off, or else I will take you into custody."

"Leave me alone, officer. I know what I'm about. Don't you interfere between man and wife."

"Wife!" exclaimed Bessie. "I'm no wife of his. Don't listen to what he says; he does not mind what falsehoods he tells. My husband is in the grounds. All I want you to do is to remove this insolent fellow."

"Do you give him in charge?"

"If he won't go quietly, I must do so, I suppose."

Peace let go his hold of Bessie, and seemed to be a little staggered at her last observation.

"You go about your business. We don't want any row here!" cried the policeman, taking Peace by the collar and dragging him towards the door. "We don't allow ladies to be insulted with impunity. So you must leave. If you don't, I shall lock you up."

"Lock me up! What for?"

"For a breach of the peace—for creating a disturbance. You take my advice and get clear off while you can, or it will be worse for you."

Peace had no desire to make the acquaintance of the inspector at the station-house, and he had, therefore, no alternative but to submit.

"I want to say a word to her before I leave," he exclaimed, nodding towards Bessie.

"Say it, then, and go."

Our hero was half beside himself with ill-suppressed passion.

"Hark ye!" he ejaculated, bending towards the female, with a hideous grin on his ill-favoured countenance, "you have carried it off bravely this time, but I'll have my revenge. I'll find you out, expose you, and bring ruin upon your head, you deceitful, worthless, despicable hussy!"

"It is out of your power to do me any mischief. You are beneath contempt," answered Bessie, turning away.

"Now, then, no more of this. Be off!" cried the constable, in an angry tone. "Be off, I say!"

There was no help for it. To avoid being forcibly ejected Peace had to leave the refreshment room with the best grace he could. But rage and despair sat at his heart. He never was more astonished than he had been by Bessie Dalton's treatment of him. He went out into the grounds in a state bordering upon frenzy. He found it difficult to believe that so complete a change had come over the pretty little work-girl whom he had been so intimate with at Bradford.

She did not seem to be like the same person. Her costume was magnificent, her manners were polished, her actions graceful, and, taken altogether, her whole appearance denoted that she was moving in the best society.

"Her husband," she said. Was she married? Possibly so.

This thought did not in any way add to his composure. On the contrary, it seemed to fret and chafe him.

He persuaded himself that he was an ill-used man—that his most intimate associates turned against him for no imaginable reason, and he therefore declared war against the whole human race.

He considered that Bessie Dalton had acted towards him in a manner which was altogether incomprehensible. She had treated him—so he considered—with the basest ingratitude, when in reality she had but cast aside a man who was not worthy a moment's consideration. At one time she had been in a measure attached to the selfish, unscrupulous burglar, but that time had long since passed away.

"My word!" he ejaculated; "but she knows how to act

the fine lady. I never should have thought it was in her. She certainly plays the part to perfection, the pretentious, overbearing little devil! Well, this little affair knocks me completely silly. What on earth can she be doing? She's evidently got into a good position by some means or other. It's altogether a mystery. It appears to me that everybody gets shoved on in this world but myself—Aveline, Bessie, and Lord knows who else besides!"

He paced the grounds of the palace in a restless and troubled manner. His mind was ill at ease. He had been singularly unfortunate in his escapades with the fair sex.

He had wasted his thoughts and time at Broxbridge over the girl Nellie, and now he was treated with scorn by an old flame, whose absence had caused him so much concern.

All this he found hard to bear.

He did not remain long in the ornamental grounds of the palace. In fact, he was sick of the place, and therefore at once made for one of the exits, and passed out of the building. As he turned off to the road leading to the station a surprise awaited him, which well-nigh took his breath away.

An open carriage, drawn by a pair of high-stepping magnificent horses, passed him. In it sat Bessie Dalton and a gentleman of aristocratic appearance on one of the seats. On the other reclined Mrs. Bristow, dressed in the height of fashion, with a male companion.

As the vehicle wheeled by Peace became completely overpowered.

"The deuce!" he exclaimed. "John Bristow's wife! The John Bristow who died on the public highway, and whose body I identified at the workhouse. His wife and Bessie Dalton riding in a carriage and lolling in the lap of luxury! It seems like a dream. Have they come into a fortune, or what? It is most unaccountable."

This discovery seemed to trouble him more than his treatment in the refreshment-room. He went back to his rooms in Leather Lane in a state of doubt, surprise, and bewilderment.

"It seems I did not go to the Crystal Palace for nothing!" he ejaculated. "Well, this beats all I ever heard of."

CHAPTER XLIII.

We left Alf Purvis at the lodging-house in Westminster. On the following evening, at six o'clock, he presented himself with a faint single rap at the door of a house in one of the streets leading out of Regent Circus.

He was admitted by a buxom maid-servant, who ushered him into the back kitchen.

"Missus expected you would come," said the girl, "and desired me to tell you to take a bath and wash yourself before you put on these clothes, which you are to wear."

She pointed to a suit of second-hand garments, which were hanging on the back of a Windsor chair.

A huge tub half filled with hot water was on the floor of the kitchen.

The girl pointed to this, and said:

"You will do as I tell you?"

"Yes," answered Alf.

The girl left the room, and the boy had his bath and put on his new things. Although he had been accustomed to work at Stoke Ferry Farm, he did not resemble in any way the rough country lads one is accustomed to see in the agricultural districts. He had a well-knit figure, a white glossy skin, a fine and almost feminine cast of features, and hair, after it had been cleaned and combed, which shone like virgin gold.

When his ablutions and toilette had been completed, he was called by the maid-servant, who was in the front kitchen. He entered, and sat himself down on one of the chairs.

"Missus will see you presently," said the girl.

Alf nodded, and quietly awaited the interview which was to follow. He felt a great deal more comfortable than he had done for a long time.

He glanced complacently at his new things, as a scholar surveys his bombazine gown, and a bishop his first pair of lawn sleeves.

In about half an hour he was shown up to the first floor, and there he found two ladies whom he had seen on the previous night at the lodging-house in Westminster, who had helped him and bade him call upon them.

The young lady who the maid had told him was Miss Stanbridge appeared to be the real mistress of the house. She professed to be very pleased to see him, and spoke in a kind manner when addressing him. Alf was quite charmed with her He did not remember to have seen anyone who pleased him better.

She asked him several questions about his former life, and soon extracted the history of all his offences and troubles. At first he touched very tenderly upon the former, but Miss Stanbridge's manner encouraged him to make a clean breast of it. She seemed to view misdemeanours in so charitable a light that he took heart of grace and told her all.

She laughed immoderately when he gave her an account of the hare being tied round his neck, and his selling it, after all, to the bird ensnarer

She inveighed against the game laws as bitterly as any sworn abolitionist could have done.

Alf Purvis was duly impressed with the justness of her remarks, as her sentiments coincided with his own.

She concluded by saying that it would be just as fair and reasonable to make laws for birds' eggs as for hares, and that so far from blaming a starving fellow-creature for taking one animal out of a wood which perhaps held hundreds of them, she could scarcely blame him for taking a sheep or a goose or a fowl from those that were over-rich to give to those who were poor.

She was anecdotal also. He was highly entertained at the story she told him of an old nobleman who was a confirmed invalid, and invariably took a constitutional early morning walk before breakfast.

One day, in going through his preserves, he met a strange, black-looking, forbidding-featured man, coming in the opposite direction.

The nobleman knew perfectly well that he had no business there, and so walking up to him he said, in an angry tone:

"Now, fellow, what are you doing here? Eh?"

"I'm taking a walk," answered the man sulkily. "And pray, if I may make so bold, what are you doing here?"

"I'm taking a walk, also," returned the nobleman, "to get an appetite for my breakfast."

"Ah!" muttered the man, "I'm taking a walk to get a breakfast for my appetite!"

The nobleman did not ask any more questions, but walked on without more ado.

This story pleased Alf immensely.

The speaker paused as if waiting for him to answer her. He observed that her eyes were searching him through and through, while the elder woman was gazing at him with a peculiar expression of tenderness mingled with pity.

"I think I shall be able to find employment for you," said the younger of the two—"that is, if you don't mind work. I will supply you with much better articles to sell in the streets or anywhere else, and, if you are a good boy, you can make this your home for the present."

"Oh, thank you, marm!" cried Alf. "I'm sure I'll do all I can to serve you."

At this the old lady smiled, and Miss Stanbridge did not vouchsafe a reply. There was a pause, after which the elder of the two females asked him if he had any father or mother. And when he said he could not remember either, and that when he asked about them he was told to hold his tongue, since he was an orphan, she started and asked him quietly what part of England he came from.

He said Broxbridge, at which his questioner started, repeating the word after him in a slow, thoughtful manner. Her emotion did not escape the observation of Alf Purvis.

"You won't find yourself badly treated here," said Miss Stanbridge. "If you do, it will be your own fault. I intend to send you out to sell different articles for me, and I shall give you a commission on all you sell."

"Thank you, marm."

"Then, as you will get your bed, board, and clothes for nothing, you will be able to put by what money you earn, which, in the course of time, let us hope, will amount to a good round sum. That will be an encouragement for you to persevere."

"Certainly, marm. I will try my hardest."

"Good lad. I think we understand one another."

The boy saluted her with his head and hand. He was delighted with the prospect which opened before him.

That night he enjoyed the luxury of a clean, comfortable bed, such as he had not known for a long time—certainly not since he had left Stoke Ferry Farm. The next morning he had a good breakfast in the kitchen in company with Susan, the housemaid.

When he had partaken of his morning's meal he was told that his mistress wanted him.

She was at breakfast. On the sideboard was a glass vase with a dozen gold and silver fish in it.

"Now, Alf," said the lady, "look at these. Do you know anything about them?"

"Oh, dear, yes! I know a good deal about them."

"You do?"

"Yes, I know everything about the street trade in live-stock, and about almost every other kind of street trade, for when I could afford it I used to go to a sixpenny lodging-house, or else had fourpennyworth at the Drury Chambers."

"What has that to do with it?"

"Well, you see, marm, there's a good many people, who are in all the street trades, goes to both places, and by asking questions and listening to their patter, I got put up to a pinch of snuff or two. That's how I came to know about these things, for, you see, I was always looking out for a better trade than birds' nests, which is but a poor one, make the best on it."

"Oh, I see, you've had more experience in those matters than I had at first imagined. Can you tell me what that is worth?"

"A thing is worth what it'll fetch."

"Yes, I know; but that is no answer to my question. What do you suppose is the value of that?"

Alf Purvis went up to the sideboard and examined them with the eye of a connoisseur or practical dealer.

"They were brought here this morning," added Miss Stanbridge, glancing at her elderly companion, who had just entered the room, and with whom she spoke in a low voice, pointing at the fish.

"They ought to fetch eighteen pence a pair; but it all depends upon the customers you meet with. Here's one pair of large silvers that are honestly worth four or five shillings of anybody's money. Large silvers are scarcer than large golds."

"Are they?"

"Yes, marm, they are, indeed."

"Well, now you must see if you can sell some of them. You've no objection?"

"None in the world."

"Where will you go? How will you set about it?"

"What I should do with these would be to walk Kensington way. On the outskirts of London they say is the best line for these. I should walk along the street crying them, and when I saw any children at the window I would knock at the door, for children crave rarely after gold fish. If I am asked where they come from I shall say some on 'em were brought from China and some from Portugal, and some from the Injies; then they'll be sure to buy 'em. People are so fond of anything that comes a long way off."

Miss Stanbridge laughed.

"You're a strange lad!" she ejaculated—"an old head upon a young pair of shoulders. So you would do that, eh?"

"Certainly; all's fair in trade, and the fun of it is that the Essex fish are the best of all, being bred in cold weather, whilst t'others have to be bred in warm ponds, and are not anything like so hardy."

"You'll do, I can see," said his patroness.

"But did the man bring a hand net with the fish, marm?" inquired the boy. "It don't do to mess 'em in your hands."

"No, I don't know that he did; but I dare say we have such a thing. My dear," she said, with a dubious smile, "will you go to the lumber-room and see if you can find one?"

Her elderly companion hesitated for a moment, then went upstairs. In a few minutes she returned with a bundle of nets of various cordage, with handles of stained wood.

These the boy said he might be able to sell with the fish.

Susan crammed a huge packet in his pocket which contained bread and meat—this was to serve him as a dinner; and he went gaily into the streets.

He returned in the evening in the best of spirits, having been unusually successful. His good looks, his clean clothes, allied with his cheery manner and lively chatter, won for him plenty of customers. He was very well satisfied with his day's work; so also was his mistress, who was no niggard in her praise.

He went out again and again, and in the course of three or four days the vase was empty.

He was called up into the drawing-room and regaled with a glass of spirits and water.

"You've done well, Alf, and I'm much pleased with you," said Miss Stanbridge. "Did you tell your customers that your fish came from foreign parts—you young rogue?"

"I was obliged to pitch it a little strong with some of them. I told 'em this fish came from one place and that from another. There, I have done wrong," he added, with a look of humility.

"Dear me! go. All's fair in trade," said his mistress. "People in this world like to be humbugged—I'm quite sure of that; besides, it doesn't do to be too particular. Why, lor' bless me, when I was of your age I didn't stick at trifles, I can tell you—not a bit of it."

And she followed up these observations by telling him a series of stories about the pilferings of her childhood, in such a manner that the boy did not understand that these were thefts she was describing so pleasantly. He was entertained, and thought she was very kind and condescending. So, indeed, she was.

But it was a condescension of a ruthless, remorseless woman, with the face of an enchantress and the heart of a demon.

She had the boy in her toils, and as our story progresses, we shall see what she made of him.

Alf Purvis went to bed that night in a state of mind which was at once happy and confused.

Happy because he had six shillings in his pocket, confused because he was not accustomed to whiskey and water, and because the doctrines which his mistress's anecdotes appeared to inculcate were so different to those which Mr. Jamblin had been accustomed to propound.

He considered the matter over before going to sleep, and came to the conclusion that one must be wrong. It was clear, however, so he thought, that the citizens of the metropolis and the rustics of the country, just as they dressed in two different styles, so viewed questions of morality from two points of view.

Which view was right he had not at present determined. It would be a blessing indeed for him if he had never left the roof of the honest old farmer. He expected to find another consignment of gold fish on the sideboard on the following morning, but in this he was mistaken. For the next few days he was sent out with second-hand telescopes and opera glasses.

He did not care much about this occupation; he was not so successful. He had to stand all day at Tower Hill, or by the docks, and waylay the seafaring men as they passed by.

They were hard customers to deal with—they were not to be talked over; were too wide awake, and were not particular in their expressions.

In addition to this, he was forestalled by a number of Jew dealers, who dealt in articles of that description.

At the end of the week he returned disheartened, and told his mistress he couldn't get on at all to his satisfaction.

The sailor gentlemen, he said, would always insist on trying his telescopes before they would make the least bid for them, and when they did bid they showed themselves much more at home in the matter than he was. They beat him, for even when they were drunk they seemed to understand them just as well.

"I suppose," cried his mistress, "that they were accustomed to look through telescopes when they were drunk aboard ship. No wonder so many vessels are lost. I haven't patience to think of such persons; but how about the opera glasses, Alf?"

"Oh, they're no good at all; nobody would even look at them. When I offered them, they said, 'Get out! What do we want with opera glasses, you little fool? Better wait till we get opera boxes.'"

"Well, we must start you in another line," said his mistress. "Don't be disheartened. You can't always be successful."

Alf was a little despondent when he retired to rest. He found himself in such comfortable quarters, and was so well cared for, that he dreaded lest his non-success should cause him to be turned adrift. To be again in the streets, with no friendly hand to help him, he naturally enough dreaded, more especially as he had now tasted the sweets of a comfortable home, for it was a home to him who had been for so long a time a sort of Arab, or outcast.

On the following morning, at his earnest solicitation, his mistress allowed him to try his luck for another day with the telescopes.

Upon his returning in the evening, he discovered, much to his surprise, a gentleman at the door—this being none other than the good Samaritan who had presented him with a shilling at the corner of Parliament Street.

He touched his forelock, and made a respectful bow to the stranger, who eyed him in a most inquiring and searching way.

"Umph! I hardly knew you again," cried Peace, for it was he. "Got a new suit of togs, it appears."

"Yes, sir."

Susan now opened the door, and Mr. Peace inquired if the mistress was in.

He was shown into the first floor.

He had no reason to complain of the reception he met with from his quondam companion—Laura Stanbridge—who professed herself delighted to see him.

"Well, Charlie," she ejaculated, after the few first civilities had been exchanged; "this puts me in mind of old times. I began to think that you had given me the cut; but I suppose you have been pretty well engaged, or I should have seen something of you."

"Middling. You see, before I leave London I thought it just as well to see a few of the sights. Perhaps I shan't have another chance for a goodish while, you know."

"Ah! just so. Then you are only here for a time—you intend returning to Sheffield?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"I see, a bird of passage—eh?"

Peace smiled. Then, after a pause, he said, quickly:

"But, I say, Laura, old girl, who was that boy I saw at the door as I came in?"

"LOCK ME UP! WHAT FOR?"

"A fair-haired lad?"

"Yes, and good-looking. I hardly knew him."

"Have you seen him before, then?" inquired Miss Stanbridge, in a tone of surprise.

"Ay, surely."

"Dear me; how remarkable! You know him, then?"

"Well, I know about him—have seen him several times in the neighbourhood of Broxbridge."

"Oh! that's where he came from."

"I suppose so. He was with Farmer Jamblin. How is it he is here?"

"Poor fellow! he was starving, and—and—well, I made him useful, and gave him board and lodging."

"Ah!" murmured Peace, looking down on the floor of the apartment. "Well, I suppose it's all right?" Here he whistled.

His companion burst out into a loud laugh.

"You're not getting nasty particular, I hope?" she ejaculated. "I suppose the boy is nothing to you?"

"Nothing at all."

"Do you know any of his relatives—his father or mother?"

"Not I; but he hasn't got any. He's an orphan—so I've been told. As to his late master, Jamblin, it would not much matter if he were at the bottom of the sea; but let us pass on to something which more immediately concerns myself. I want you to do me a favour."

Laura Stanbridge clapped her hands together, and said joyfully:

"Certainly, old man, with pleasure. What is it?"

"You are mistress of this house, I suppose?"

"Yes. All right; go on."

"And you can let me have the use of one of the top attics for a night?"

"Of course I can; for as many nights as you like, for the matter of that. But, I say, what's your little game? You have something on—that I can see plain enough."

"You are right, I have. Between us there should be no concealment; there should be mutual confidence."

The girl smiled and nodded.

Peace went on.

He could be plausible enough when it answered his purpose.

"Well, this is it," he said, in continuation. "A crib is to be cracked, and I want to gain the roof of this block of buildings. I can do so easily enough by creeping through one of the windows of your attics. That's plain enough for you, isn't it?"

"Most unmistakably plain. You want to get through one of the attic windows. Well, and what then?"

"The rest is my business. Once on the roof I shall know how to work. What say you? Will you oblige an old pal?"

"I dare not refuse you so trifling a favour; but you must understand, Charlie, that if I am suspected, and a search is made in this house, I am done for. At present I am not suspected, but——"

"You have no call to be alarmed; I shall emerge from the window, close it after me, and no one will be any the wiser."

"Let us hope such will be the case."

"You don't care about running any risk to serve a friend, is that what you mean?"

"I have not said so, Charles. It is you who will have to run the risk. You are welcome to the use of the room, or

rather the window. Take care, however, you don't fall down and break your neck."

"Where does the maid-servant sleep?"

"In the back room, second floor."

"Does anyone occupy either of the attics?"

"No. One is used as a lumber room, the other as an occasional bedroom, but not often. You can occupy it if you like."

"That is precisely what I wish to do."

"The matter is easily arranged. You can have a latch-key and let yourself in after we are all in bed. Creep upstairs, and enter the room. Let me at once show you the way to it."

Laura Stanbridge rose and conducted Peace into the attic in question.

He said nothing could be better adapted for his purpose.

It was agreed between the two conspirators that the door should be left unbolted, and Peace was at liberty to enter at what hour he thought best suited for his purpose.

His female companion presented him with a latch-key, and after some further conversation and protestations of friendship on either side, he took his departure, well satisfied with his diplomatic arrangement.

It was not, however, without considerable misgivings that Miss Stanbridge had yielded to his request, and had it not been that she was in his power, and therefore dreaded to make him her enemy, she most likely would have given him a point-blank refusal. As it was, she had no other alternative. She knew the man she was dealing with, and therefore deemed it advisable to temporise. Peace had taken her by surprise, and had talked to her in such a plausible way that she was thrown off her guard, and had given in without the faintest show of resistance.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Charles Peace appeared to be like the tiger, who, after tasting human flesh, had an insatiable appetite for fresh victims.

He had contemplated the burglary he was about to put into practice for some weeks, and had well considered the matter before his interview with Laura Stanbridge.

Within a few doors of her residence was a jeweller's shop.

Peace's object was to obtain an easy access to this.

He had ascertained that the owner of the establishment in question did not reside on the premises—he had a house at Fulham for himself and his family.

After the day's business was over, he repaired thither, leaving his housekeeper, a maid-servant, and one of his assistants in charge of his town residence.

The maid-servant was constrained to sleep out of the house, having to attend upon her mother, who was dangerously ill; consequently the only occupants of the establishment after closing hours were a young man, who was the jeweller's assistant, and an old woman, who acted in the capacity of housekeeper.

Peace, therefore, came to the conclusion that if he gained an entrance into the house there would not be much difficulty in obtaining possession of a large amount of property.

Between the hours of one and two o'clock in the morning he let himself into Laura Stanbridge's house, and closing the street door noiselessly, he proceeded upstairs, and reached the attic without disturbing any of the inmates.

Here he remained for some little time before carrying out his plan of operation.

He then ruminated for a brief period, and quietly opened the lattice window.

He peered forth—the noise of distant wheels of some passing vehicle was the only sound which broke the stillness of the night.

He crept through the open casement, and gained the gutter, then he closed the window and passed along till he reached the roof of an adjoining house.

He cast a hasty glance around, and came to the conclusion that his movements were unobserved by any prying or inquisitive eye.

He felicitated himself upon his success thus far, and so silently and stealthily passed on to the roof of the next house, and so on till he had reached the one upon which he had to perform.

His purpose was to effect an entrance by removing the trap door in the roof; having reached this he at once set to work, but some little time elapsed before he succeeded in sliding back the bolts.

But he was, as we have already seen, an adept at this sort of business, and eventually the trap was removed, and he passed through the opening.

The rest was, of course, an easy matter. He placed the trap in its original position, and dropped into the loft.

He now felt assured that he was about to meet with triumphant success.

In this, however, he was greatly mistaken.

A gentleman in one of the adjoining houses, who had been working till a late hour in writing for the Press, had observed his movements from the top window of one of the houses which commanded a view of the jeweller's.

His attention had been attracted to the figure of a man passing over the roof.

He rose from his seat, drew back the curtains of his window, and watched Peace's proceedings.

When he saw him remove the trap-door and creep through the opening he naturally enough suspected that something was amiss.

He was well acquainted with the jeweller, and knew perfectly well that he was at Fulham; he knew, moreover, that there were but two persons sleeping in the establishment.

He at once put on his coat and hat and sallied forth, and bent his steps in the direction of the nearest police-station.

Peace in the meanwhile was busily engaged in collecting together all the valuables he could lay his hands upon. These he placed in a heap on the counter of the shop.

The housekeeper and the shopman were all this time sleeping soundly.

While engaged in his depredations he heard the sounds of voices outside, and saw the fitful flashing of lights against the windows of the residence.

He closed the door of the shop, locked it, and put the key into his pocket; then he proceeded upstairs into the front room, first floor, and listened.

People were astir in the street.

He peeped through the window blind and saw three or four policemen in front of the house.

"The devil!" he ejaculated, perfectly astounded at the discovery. "Bobbies! Here's a pretty go; I'm done as brown as a berry."

He drew back from the window blind, and began to seriously consider what was to be done.

It was too plainly evident that the police, from some cause or other, were on the alert.

To return by means of the roof was now an impossibility, as his movements would be seen and capture certain. What was he to do?

It required all his fortitude to meet the urgency of the case.

Escape appeared impossible. Doubtless the back premises were being watched as carefully as the front of the house.

But Peace was equal to the occasion, and hoped to be master of the situation.

Any way he resolved upon a bold stroke of policy.

Several loud raps were given at the front door.

Peace took off his coat, and, opening the window of the front drawing-room, rubbed his eyes as if just aroused from slumber, and, peering forth, said, in a drawling tone:

"What is the matter, policeman? Is the house on fire?"

"No, sir," answered one of the constables. "No; but you've got a burglar inside your premises."

"Goodness me!" exclaimed our hero. "I'll come down and let you in. A burglar, eh?"

He went to the front door, which he unfastened, and said, in a tone of well-simulated alarm:

"Don't let him escape. Search the house, and—and place a guard at the door."

Two policemen at once proceeded upstairs, another kept guard over the entrance, while a fourth was on the opposite side of the way, flashing his bull's-eye on the screened windows of the establishment.

"There is a fire somewhere," said Peace, in a confidential tone, to the nearest policeman. "Of that I am quite certain. Don't you smell something burning?"

The man sniffed, and said he could not smell anything.

"It's at the back—that's where it is!" cried our hero. "Come this way, policeman."

As he said this, he walked leisurely along the front of the house, which was a corner one, and led the way to the street by its side. The policeman followed.

At the back of the jeweller's was a mews.

"There!" exclaimed Peace. "It's there!"

The policeman, thrown completely off his guard—he was quite a green hand—walked a few steps down the mews, and looked about in the vain effort to discover the fire.

This was Peace's opportunity—it was one he did not fail to avail himself of.

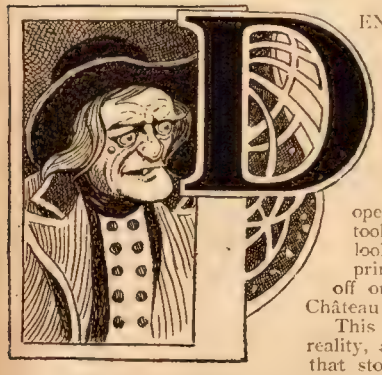
(To be continued.)

Rigaudier,

A TRAGIC TALE OF LOVE and VENGEANCE and of WOMAN'S CONSTANCY.

"All the travail, all the weeping,
Here is laid to rest;
Love that bound them,
Love that crowned them,
Takes them to his breast."
—ANON., "The Dead Lovers."

PART II.



DENIS left the hostelry and proceeded about ten yards, when he suddenly stopped as if struck by a sudden thought, and returned to the inn, went up to his bedroom, opened his knapsack, took out his pistols, looked well to the primings, and started off once more for the Château d'Orme.

This château was, in reality, a picturesque ruin, that stood on the borders of a small forest, at some distance from Cartelmassin. It had once been the home of an ancient and illustrious French family, but when the revolutionary conflagration of 1793 broke out, like many a kindred house, D'Orme perished in the flames of democratic wrath. It was assaulted, besieged, and captured; its noble inmates, a butler, a cook, an old lady, and two young girls, after suffering the most frightful indignities imaginable, perished on the guillotine.

The noble old pile had been consigned to the flames, and now all that remained of its one-time splendour were four bare, upstanding walls, decayed and crumbling in many places. The roof had fallen in years ago, the outhouses had been levelled to the ground, and the gardens and terraces had been irradicably defaced, and were now covered with weeds, long grass, and creeping plants.

Such was the spot where Amabel and Denis were to meet.

Snow had been falling heavily during the last week, and the night was dry and frosty.

A clear moon hung in the dark blue skies, and satellite stars shone and sparkled on the fringe of the greater orb's pale radiance. The snow was hard and inclined to be slippery, but Denis, accustomed as he was to various climes and difficult travelling, made rapid progress towards his destination.

A turn in the road brought him into full sight of the ruins of Château d'Orme, and the surrounding forest. The scene was indescribably romantic; on all sides the white, smooth snow, covering the ground and crusting the branches of the trees; in the centre of the picture the four ruined, upstanding walls, a black contrast to the snowy background, and above, the calm, placid moon and a thousand stars.

Now and again a wind would rush through the forest, and all the trees would sigh with a common voice.

Now and again a blackbird would utter a strange, weird screech, and flutter forth from its home in the ruined walls. Denis wrapped his coat closely round him, and waited for Amabel. He waited some time—to his heated imagination it seemed hours—and he began to think that, after all, he would not see her, when suddenly in the distance he saw an indistinct form running towards him. Then he caught sight of a fluttering dress, and his heart bounded with the glad certainty that this was Amabel.

He went to meet her.

She came running forwards, the hood of her cloak blown back, and red-gold hair streaming in the wind. Her face by the exertion of running was flushed with something of its old glow of youth, and her eyes sparkled. She ran up to Denis, and, without a word or a sign, threw herself passionately upon his breast, and she sobbed out her heart, clinging to him like a child that has found a long-lost protector. She seemed like a bird that had been caught in the storm, a bird that, with ruffled plumage and wounded wing, had fluttered back into its nest.

Denis pressed her to his breast and covered her face with kisses, rapturous in their intensity.

"Oh, my love, what does it all mean? Tell me that it is some hideous nightmare, some disease of fancy!"

"Nay, Denis, it is truth, pitiable truth!"

"Amabel, love, how did it all happen?"

"Wait, be patient but a few moments, and I will tell you everything."

He walked back into the shade of the ruins and sat down upon a long, fallen stone that lay near one of the walls.

"I have come here under great difficulty. He watches my every movement; he is terribly suspicious now you have returned. But he always falls off to sleep after his supper. I have taken that opportunity to see you. I felt, dear love, I must see you again, and to explain to you, Denis, all that it is possible to explain."

Denis put his arm round her, and pressed his cheek to hers. They kept very close to each other, for the night was cold, while Amabel told her story.

"After you went away from Cartelmassin, I lived with Madame De Beloine, until she died. Chevalier Bertrand was a constant visitor at her house, he conducted all her business, and, I think, swindled her. He was the only man she would allow to come near me. He was so old and harmless; she judged. Bertrand was always very kind to me, and I looked upon him in the light of a father.

"When madame died, I stayed on for some time alone. My position was intolerable. All the young men made insulting overtures to me. They pestered me with their attentions. Wherever I went they followed me. They would not give me a moment's peace. What was I to do? Who had I to protect me? I went to Chevalier Bertrand, and told him of my misery, and prayed of him to see that no harm came to me. He wept over me, and called me his dear daughter. He insisted that I should come and live in his house, and I joyfully accepted his invitation. Oh, would to God that I had been dead before that day!"

This miserable girl covered her face with her hands and sobbed afresh. Denis rested her little head upon his shoulder and soothed her with a lover's words of comfort. After a time the violence of her sobs subsided, and she proceeded with her tale.

"Bertrand went over in his cart to the house where Madame Beloine had lived, and fetched away all my things. I went to bed early that night, said my prayers, and thanked God for His goodness in sheltering me in such safety. I fell asleep. I awoke in the middle of the night. Arms strong and sinewy were around me, a man's hot breath was on my face, and I was being smothered with kisses."

"Oh, monstrous!"

Denis shuddered, his face was pale, and the veins in his forehead stood out like whipcord.

"Go on, Amabel," he said presently; "I can bear it."

"I shrieked, I struggled, but to no purpose. My strength was as nothing in the lascivious hands of Chevalier Bertrand. Bertrand kept me a prisoner in this room. He brought me food with his own hands, and kept the key of the door in his pocket. He visited me every night. When I found I was going to have a child, I consented to marry him."

"Good God! you had a child, then?"

"Yes."

"Is it alive?"

"It was born dead."

"God be thanked!"

A long silence followed.

Clasped in each other's arms, the two young hearts consoled each other as best they could, and mingled their flowing tears.

"Oh, Denis, take me away! It was not my fault. I could not help it. Take me away, love, do not let me go back to that devil!"

"Amabel, you are, then, unhappy?"

"My life is a torment. I work, I slave, I am bullied, beaten and kicked like a dog. Bertrand is not a man, he is a fiend. I dare not disobey him in the slightest thing. Oh, take me away, love!"

He took her closer in his arms, kissed her again and again, reassured her fears, and promised that from that moment he would never leave her.

"Let us go from here, Amabel, at once. I must go to the inn, procure horses, and we will fly at once."

They rose to depart.

As they reached the entrance of the ruins, a horrible laugh rang out, echoed through the walls. Startled, Denis looked up, and saw straight in his pathway the figure of Chevalier Bertrand, chuckling with fiendish glee at their discomfiture.

The old man's figure was absolutely diabolical. His small, rat-like eyes flashed with malevolent hate, and his jaws were expanded in a horrible grin.

"So there you are, my beauties, are you?" he cried. "I've heard all your pretty love talk."

"Get out of my way at once," said Denis sternly.

"Fool! shut your mouth!" screamed the old man, his rage rising as he spoke. He turned to Amabel, and commanded her to come to him at once. The girl, cowed and dismayed, would have acted obediently, but Denis restrained her.

The young man pulled a pistol out of his belt and levelled it at Bertrand's head. The wretch saw his intention, and with a howl of terror put up his hands.

A shot, a sharp flash, and a bullet crashed into Bertrand's brain. He fell to the ground, writhing in agony, and screaming, "Help!"

Denis fired again, and this time the bullet pierced Bertrand's right eyeball, and left him silent and dead.

"He will harm us no more," said Denis grimly, as he restored the smoking pistols to his belt. Amabel, pale as death and tottering, clung to her lover for support.

"We must fly at once," she whispered. "Bertrand's horses—I know where they are. Let us take them now, without delay."

The pair crept from the ruins to Bertrand's deserted house, unlocked the stables, put the horses in a light cart, and drove from Cartelmassin with all possible speed.

Old Marchant was in his cottage that night when he heard the sounds of wheels and horses' hoofs galloping past his door.

He went out, but the vehicle, whatever it was, had vanished.

"There is something strange abroad to-night," he said to his wife. "I distinctly heard two pistol-shots, not an hour ago."

Several other villagers also said that they had heard shots, Labourdet amongst them, and speculation ran high as to the cause of the mysterious firing. In the morning Bertrand and his wife were missing. Labourdet ran into Rigaudier's room to tell him the news, and found it empty. His knapsack was there, open, full of articles, but the pistols had gone.

A BULLET CRASHED INTO BERTRAND'S BRAIN.

Then a man came rushing into the inn. His face was white, and he spoke in scared accents. He had passed the ruins of Château d'Orme that morning. He found the body of neighbour Bertrand there, shot through the head. The snow had sucked in the blood, but the imprint of hurrying footsteps were easily discernible.

Excitement now ran high in the little village. The suspicions of all fell on Denis Rigaudier, and a search for the missing man and woman was instituted.

The body of the murdered miller was taken to his house.

About this time the boy who had brought the message from Amabel to Denis, frightened at the uproar which was raging on all sides, with many tears and supplications for mercy, confessed his part in the transaction, and his testi-

mony served to link together a very strong chain of evidence around Rigaudier. His story also made clear the otherwise unaccountable presence of Bertrand at the ruins. It appeared that, when Amabel had seen her husband had fallen asleep, and had gone out to meet Denis, the boy, who worked at Bertrand's mill, was told to sit by the kitchen fire and keep it alight. Unexpectedly Bertrand, for once, started early out of his after-supper sleep, complaining of bad dreams.

He inquired for his wife, and, receiving an evasive reply, fell into a terrible rage, and swore he would kill the boy unless he was told the truth. The boy, terrified at this threat, confessed that Amabel had gone to meet a gentleman from the inn at the Château d'Orme. Bertrand at once rushed out, swearing fearful vengeance on his wife and her lover.

A hue and cry was now raised everywhere for Rigaudier and Amabel. The miller's cart was found discarded in the

The neck was dripping; the lips smiled.

roadway, near a town, thirty-five miles from Cartelmassin. All over France the police searched diligently for the missing couple, and at last ran them to earth in Paris.

They were breakfasting at a fashionable hotel, in a private room. Amabel, in a loose bed-gown, was pouring out the chocolate, when suddenly the door was thrown open, and a company of gendarmes rushed into the room.

With a cry of terror, the girl sprang up from her chair. Rigaudier offered no resistance.

"I am at your service, gentlemen," he said, as the handcuffs were slipped on his wrists.

"Oh, take me, too! take me with him!" cried Amabel passionately.

"Certainly, madam; that is our intention," replied the officer in charge, with a smile.

The trial that followed was long and interesting.

Amabel was almost immediately acquitted from the capital charge. Rigaudier, who had plenty of money, procured the finest advocates.

It was urged on his behalf that he eloped with Bertrand's wife on the night of the murder, and had left the ruins in her company before Bertrand reached them. The miller had, therefore, met his death at other hands than Rigaudier's—had, in fact, probably been the victim of robbery. No money was found on the dead man, so his pockets must have been rifled.

As the miller was an uncompromising miser, and never by chance carried money on his person, this contention was robbed of much of its force.

Rigaudier was found guilty and was sentenced to death. He bowed to the judges, smiled bravely at Amabel, and left the dock with a firm tread. Between the date of his trial and that appointed for his execution he preserved a tranquil, gallant demeanour.

He wrote a full confession of his crime, recounting the incidents minutely, and concluded with the hope that, if he had failed to justify his deed to man, he trusted he had done so to God, and hoped for forgiveness from the Divine mercy.

Amabel distracted with grief, yet mustered the courage to visit her doomed lover daily.

At their last meeting she said, "You go before me, love, but you will not have to wait long."

On the day of execution an enormous crowd gathered round the guillotine. Rigaudier, calm as ever, mounted the scaffold, and took off his scarf with his own hand. He was quickly pinioned, and laid on the instrument of death. The lever was pulled, the knife descended, and Rigaudier's head tumbled into the basket. Some time afterwards, a woman, heavily veiled, asked the executioner if she might be allowed to touch the head.

He replied that it was against the rules, but the woman put ten gold pieces—the remnant of Rigaudier's little fortune—into his hand, and the executioner's conscience became more complacent. She took the head in her hands. It was quite white, blood ran down the wan cheeks, from the eyelids, the neck was still dripping, but the lips smiled.

She kissed the lips passionately, then gave the head quietly back to the executioner, and went away.

The woman was Amabel, who was found the next day floating in the Seine, smiling as her lover Rigaudier had smiled, and reconciled in death.

A Nice Objection.

A LAWYER, who some years ago was distinguished by the epithet of the "extraordinary" special pleader, and was afterwards raised to the peerage, is said to have received the sum of £20,000 in one single case, the defence of a young lady of rank, who was indicted for child murder. The principal witness was a female accoucheur, who had been forcibly carried to the lady's house blindfolded. She swore that her guide forded a river twice in going to the house where her assistance was wanted, when, said the lawyer, it was known that there was but one straight river between the houses; and, supposing the guide, in order to deceive the midwife, should have made a wheel round to pass it again, she must then have forded it a third time. The ingenuity of this remark so completely puzzled the jury that they acquitted the prisoner without going out of court.

The Card-Playing Pickpockets.

THIRTY-FIVE years ago the county gaol of B—— was undergoing extensive alterations, during which time a gang of pickpockets—four in number—were arrested one market-day.

Owing to the alterations, these worthies were placed during the day in one cell, but were kept under the strictest surveillance, the care of them being relegated to the deputy-governor.

One day, while going his rounds, he observed that they were playing cards, when he promptly opened the door and summoned a warder, with whom he proceeded to search every corner of the cell. Yet no cards were found. However, the card-playing still continued, until the day on which the thieves were to be discharged.

While awaiting their release, the governor took them into his office and asked them as a favour to explain to him how and where they had hidden the cards.

Then they told him that as soon as the deputy-governor entered the cell they stuck the cards in his pocket and picked it again before he left!

THE MADNESS OF GEORGE VICTOR TOWNLEY

"Constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain."
—COLERIDGE, "Christabel."

PART II.

THE first witness called for the defence was John Green, who deposed as follows: "I am waiter at the Midland Hotel, and remember the prisoner coming to the hotel on Thursday evening, the 20th of August. He asked for chops and tea. At first there was nothing to attract my attention, but afterwards he walked up and down the coffee-room. He took very little indeed of his tea, and, after writing a letter, asked what time the mail went out, and, on my replying nine o'clock, he went out, apparently to post the letter himself. The next morning he asked if there were any letters for Townley. He poured out a cup of tea, and had some dry toast. Before that he walked up and down, and muttered something which I understood to mean soda and brandy. He had a wild, excited appearance about his eyes. After breakfast he walked up and down, muttering to himself. I thought him very eccentric. He asked the way to the smoking-room, and, when I told him, he said, 'I don't want to know the way to the smoking-room; I know my way all over the house.' I came to the conclusion that he was not right in his mind. Inspector Davis and Chief-constable Fox have been to me, and I told them that, in my opinion, the prisoner was not quite right in his mind."

This was not very conclusive evidence, but it was only the prelude to more important and interesting testimony as to the prisoner's state of mind. There was a hush of breathless expectancy in court when Dr. Forbes Winslow, the celebrated expert in mental cases, father of the present much less celebrated doctor of that name, stepped into the witness-box. In reply to the questions of the prisoner's counsel, Dr. Forbes Winslow said:

"I have seen the prisoner twice in the presence of Mr. Sims, the governor of the gaol. He was not aware of my name or of the object of my visit. His behaviour was quite natural and not assumed. I talked to him largely on the subject of the crime. I was with him nearly two hours on the first occasion, and three-quarters of an hour on the second. I think that at this present moment he is a man of deranged intellect. He was deranged on the 18th of November, and I thought still more so last night, when I saw him the second time. If I had any doubt as to his insanity on the 18th of November, I had none whatever last night. I adverted to the conversation I had had with him on the previous occasion, with a view of satisfying my mind that I had left him with an accurate impression of what he had said. He repeated to me that he did not recognise he had committed any crime at all, neither did he feel any degree of pain, regret, contrition, or remorse for what he had done. I endeavoured to impress on his mind on my first visit the serious nature of the crime he had committed. He repudiated the idea of its being a crime either against God or man, and, in reply to some observation of mine, attempted to justify the act, alleging that he considered Miss Goodwin as his own property; that she had been illegally wrested from him by an act of violence; that he viewed her in the light of his wife who had committed an act of adultery, and that he had as perfect a right to deal with her life as he had with any other description of property, as the money in his pocket, etc. I endeavoured to prove to him the gross absurdity of his statement and the enormity of his offence, and he replied, 'Nothing short of a miracle can alter my opinions.' The expression that Miss Goodwin was his property was frequently repeated. He killed her, he maintained, to recover and repossess himself of property that had been stolen from him. I could not disturb this, as I thought, very insane idea.

"I said, 'Suppose anyone robbed you of a picture, what course would you take to recover it?' He said he would demand its restitution, and, if it were not granted, he would take the person's life without compunction. I remarked that he had no right to take the law into his own hands; he should have recourse to legal measures to obtain restitution. He said that he recognised the right of no man to sit in judgment upon him. He was a free agent, and, as he did not bring himself into the world by any action of his own, he had perfect liberty to think and act as he pleased, irrespective of anyone else.

"I regard these expressions as the evidence of a diseased intellect.

"Last evening he said that he had been for some weeks previously to the 21st of August under the influence of a conspiracy. There were six conspirators plotting against him, with a view to destroy him, with a chief conspirator at their head. This conspiracy was still going on while he was in prison, and he had no doubt that, if he was at liberty, they would continue their operations against him, and in order to escape their evil purposes he would have to leave the country. He became much excited and assumed a wild, maniacal aspect. I am satisfied that aspect was not simulated. I could not get from him the names of the conspirators."

On cross-examination, Dr. Winslow added that he should class the case "as one of general derangement"; that Townley did "not appear to have a sane opinion on a moral point"; that "his moral sense was more vitiated than I ever saw that of any other human being"; that he "seemed incapable of reasoning correctly on any moral subject"; and that he "was beyond atheism."

Before the excitement produced by Dr. Forbes Winslow's evidence subsided, a further sensation was caused by the calling of the prisoner's mother, Mary Townley. Amid a deathlike silence she gave the following evidence:

"I am the prisoner's mother. He had a very poor capacity for business pursuits, and had no profession in August last. In March of this year (1863) I received a letter from Miss Goodwin, expressing great affection for my son. They were on the most affectionate terms, and my son's affection continued the same as ever. On the 12th of August he received a letter from Miss Goodwin, which I saw." (The letter was one of those given by Townley to Captain Goodwin and burnt by him.) "It spoke of a clergyman, the most delightful man she had ever seen in her life. He had been staying at Wigwell, and her grandfather thought he would just suit her, but that would not do. It ended, 'Yours affectionately.' The usual conclusion was, 'Your own darling,' or something of that sort. I saw him on the Saturday, three days after he received that letter. There was another from Miss Goodwin to him on that day. It said she had a good deal to say to him, and it had better be said at once. Grandfather had found out that they corresponded, and was wild that there was anything in the way.

"'I want you to release me,' the letter went on, 'that I may have it to say I am free. Don't take this too hardly, in pity for me. I shall not marry if I can help it.' That letter was signed, 'Yours sincerely.' That seemed to have turned his brain. He was in such an excited, suppressed state of feeling that I asked Mr. Arrowsmith to sit up with him. The next morning I went to my son's room. He was at the door, and appeared very excited, but externally calm. He had not been in bed. He took nothing but tea and brandy for breakfast, and only very little for dinner. That evening (Sunday, the 16th of August) he wrote a letter to Miss Goodwin. He took a long time to write it, and was nervous and excited while doing so. He came down on Monday morning and lay on the sofa. He appeared very restless. His hands and feet were twitching nervously. I gave him some morphia. He remained on the sofa till dinner-time, and took no dinner. After dinner he wrote another letter to Miss Goodwin.

"On Tuesday morning he took hardly any breakfast, and appeared not to have had a night's rest. He then went to Manchester to give a French lesson, and on coming back he was in a perspiration, and said he hoped he was not going to have an illness. That afternoon he went to Bolton, to Mr. Arrowsmith's.

"On Thursday another letter came from Miss Goodwin, and I telegraphed to him to return home. On arriving he showed me a letter he had received from Miss Goodwin at Bolton. The purport of it was that if he wished to see her

he should go to the Midland Hotel at Derby, where he would find a note from her, but she did not wish to see him. There was a postscript: 'After all, you had better come,' and she mentioned the trains. We consulted on what was to be done at the station, and fixed that he had better go to Derby. The letter I gave him from Miss Goodwin evidently distressed him. Shortly afterwards he left for Derby. His manner was generally reserved, but excited. I noticed an excited manner. That was his natural manner during the whole course of his life. He was only excited on occasions. I noticed a change after the receipt of Miss Goodwin's letters. I believe an objection was made to my marriage with Mr. Townley on the ground of the insanity in my family."

When the evidence for the defence was concluded, Mr. Baron Martin summed up the case to the jury. So far as the act was concerned, his lordship said, it was the clearest case he had ever had the misfortune to try. It was plain that the prisoner suffered as much as probably any man ever suffered. That was clear from the evidence of his friends and of the waiter at the Midland Hotel; but it was equally clear that he did not appear to be insane in the eyes of the landlady of the Bull's Head, or in those of Mr. Harris. The prisoner then

He appeared very restless.

went to the Grange and remained in the company of the young lady from half-past six to nearly nine o'clock, when the deed was committed. It was probable that he implored her to renew the engagement, and perhaps reproached her with her conduct towards him. She may have been conscious that she had not behaved well to him, and may have remained in his company from a sense of his distress and from an anxiety to do all in her power to relieve his mind. He then inflicted upon the young lady the wounds which caused her death. That was murder, subject only to the question of insanity. No one could doubt that the prisoner knew what he was doing, and that it would cause death. Unless he was insane, therefore, under those circumstances he was guilty of murder.

The reason the prisoner gave for his act was, "She should not have proved false to me." Now, if his real motive was that he conceived himself to have been ill-used, and either from jealousy of the man who was preferred to him or from a desire of revenge upon her, committed the act, that would be murder. Those were the very passions which the law required men to control, and if the deed was done under the influence of those passions, there was no doubt that it was murder. The prisoner's expression that he should be hanged for it indicated that he knew the consequences of his act.

Another reason he gave for what he had done was, "The woman who deceives me must die." If a young lady promised to marry a man, and then changed her mind, it might be truly said that she deceived him; but what would be the consequences to society if men were to say every woman who treated them in that way should die, and were to carry out these views by cutting her throat? The prisoner claimed to exercise the same power over a wife as he could lawfully exercise over a chattel, but that was not a delusion, nor like a delusion. It was the conclusion of a man who had arrived at results different from those generally arrived at, and contrary to the laws of God and man, but it was not a delusion. Evidence, indeed, had been given of an actual delusion in the prisoner's mind in supposing that there was a conspiracy against him. That was an apt and common instance of delusion. There was also evidence of insanity in the maternal line, and it was true that insanity was hereditary, and did descend in families. The object of that was to show that it was possible, and not unlikely, that the hereditary taint might exist in the prisoner.

All the evidence, however, failed to show the existence of any delusion in the prisoner's mind which would explain this act. None of his family conceived him to be mad. It was clear that such an idea had not entered into their minds, or they would not have recommended him to go and see Miss Goodwin. They treated him as sane from beginning to end, as a proper person to contract matrimony, and re-engage the affections of this young woman. The account of his state of mind upon receiving her letters was most probably correct. Most men would probably suffer in the same way under similar circumstances. It has been said by one of the witnesses that the prisoner did not know the difference between good and evil. If that was a test of insanity, many men were tried who did not know that difference. In truth it was no test at all. The idea of a conspiracy was a delusion; but the mere setting himself up against the law of God and man was not a delusion at all.

The question for the jury was, "Was the prisoner insane, and did he do the act under a delusion, believing it to be other than it was?" If he knew what he was doing, and that it was likely to cause death, and was contrary to the law of God and man, and that the law directed that persons who did such acts should be punished, he was guilty of murder.

The jury then retired, and after an absence of five minutes returned into court with a verdict of "Guilty" of wilful murder.

Baron Martin, having put on the black cap, said:

"Prisoner at the bar, after every possibility in your favour has been urged with an ability never excelled, you have been found guilty of wilful murder, and in that verdict I entirely concur. If the defence which has been set up in your behalf had prevailed, it would, in my opinion, have been attended with consequences dangerous to society. If it entered into the minds of men that they might take the life of any woman who was fickle, the results would be fearful. I have now only one duty to perform. With regard to that I have no discretion, but am under an absolute necessity of fulfilling it. I beg of you to take advantage of your opportunity to make your peace with God. I have no desire by any comment of mine to distress you or any other persons, but will, without saying more, pronounce the sentence imposed by the law."

His lordship then, with much emotion, passed sentence of death upon the prisoner.

On the day after the trial Mr. Baron Martin addressed to Sir George Grey, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, the following letter:

"Nottingham, December 13, 1863.

"Sir,—George Victor Townley was convicted yesterday before me at Derby of murder, and sentenced to be executed. I have directed a copy of my notes to be made for you should you desire to have it; but there is a full report of the trial in the newspapers. The conviction was, in my opinion, right; but Dr. Forbes Winslow and Dr. Gisborne were examined at the trial, and both deposed in the strongest manner that the prisoner is now of diseased mind and absolutely insane. I think it right to call your attention at once to the subject, with a view to a correct opinion being formed as to the propriety of his execution.—I have, etc.

"Samuel Martin."

Upon receiving this letter, Sir George Grey, as he afterwards stated, read carefully the evidence given at the trial, but being not so much impressed with the statements of the two medical witnesses as the judge appeared to have been, he wrote to him to inquire whether he had formed, from the evidence given at the trial or from the demeanour of the prisoner, any opinion of his own as to whether the prisoner

was insane, and whether he thought that further inquiry ought to take place. To this letter Baron Martin returned the following answer:

"SIR,—I have received your letter of the 17th inst., requesting me to inform Sir George Grey whether the impression produced on my mind by the evidence of the two medical witnesses on the trial of George Victor Townley, coupled with the demeanour of the prisoner, was such as to induce me to believe that the prisoner is now insane, or that there is such reason to believe him so as to call for further inquiry. I cannot say that I have formed any decided opinion upon the point. The demeanour of the prisoner afforded me no means of arriving at one. He sat during the trial with his head depressed; I scarcely once saw his countenance, and he never spoke. I should not be justified in saying that the evidence of Dr. Forbes Winslow and Dr. Gisborne is not correct, but I certainly think, and have thought ever since the trial, that there ought to be further inquiry.

"I enclose a copy of my notes of the evidence. You will find that of Dr. Winslow and Dr. Gisborne at page 25 and following pages.—I am, etc.,

"SAMUEL MARTIN."

In consequence of this answer Sir George Grey addressed a letter to the Commissioners in Lunacy, requesting them to inform him what their opinion was as to the prisoner's then existing state of mind. The answer of the Commissioners, which was dated December 29, reached Sir George Grey just forty-eight hours before the time appointed for the execution. It was not very explicit or distinct in its terms, but stated that in their opinion the prisoner could not be considered as being then of sound mind, but, according to the law laid down by Baron Martin, he was responsible for his actions. Upon that report alone, Sir George Grey stated, he should not have felt justified in interfering to prevent the execution. But by the same conveyance which brought this report came a certificate, signed by three magistrates, and also by a surgeon and physician, which was in these terms:

"Derby County and Borough Gaol,
"Dec. 27, 1863.

"We, the undersigned, William Thomas Cox, Thomas Boden Forman, and Thomas Roe, being three justices of the peace for the county or borough of Derby, as hereunder described, hereby certify that we this day attended at the County and Borough Gaol, situate in the said borough of Derby, and with the aid of Henry Goode, of Derby, aforesaid, Doctor of Medicine, and Thomas Harwood, of the same place, surgeon, then and there proceeded to examine and inquire into the mental state and condition of George Victor Townley, confined in the same gaol under sentence of death; and we, the said William Thomas Cox, Thomas Boden Forman, Thomas Roe, Henry Goode, and Thomas Harwood, further certify that the said George Victor Townley is insane."

This certificate had been prepared in conformity with the Act of the 3 and 4 Vict., c. 54. There was very little time for deliberation. The execution of the sentence was imminent, and Sir George Grey, conceiving that he had no alternative but to comply with the statute thus put in force, at once signed a respite, which he forwarded to Derby, and followed up this step by issuing a warrant for the removal of the prisoner to Bethlehem Hospital.

While the ferment in the public mind continued, Sir George Grey resolved on taking another step to ascertain the actual state of the prisoner's mind. Acting with the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor, he directed four medical gentlemen of much experience in cases of lunacy to visit Townley, to investigate his state and report thereon.

In due course the four commissioners issued the following report, which is, I think, sufficiently interesting to give in extenso:

"January 28.

"We, the undersigned, having been requested by Secretary Sir George Grey to examine into the state of mind of George Victor Townley, a prisoner under sentence of death in Bethlehem Hospital, and to report our opinion whether he is of unsound mind, report as follows:

"We have carefully considered the copies of papers supplied to us, and on the 26th and 27th days of this month we have had two lengthened interviews with the prisoner, and the conclusion at which we have unanimously arrived is that George Victor Townley is of sound mind.

"The demeanour of the prisoner during each interview was calm and self-possessed, with the exception that at the commencement of the second interview he displayed and expressed annoyance at the repeated examinations to which he was being subjected. Neither in mode of speech nor in look and conduct was there any sign of insanity observable in him.

"His prompt apprehension of the purport of our questions, and the manner in which he replied to them, indicated the possession of good intellectual capacity.

"The opinions which he avows that men, as the creatures of circumstances, are not justly responsible for their actions, are opinions at which he appears to have arrived by ordinary process of reasoning.

"That he knows that he is responsible for the commission of crime is made clear by his own words used to us: 'I expected to be hanged because I killed her, and am not such a fool as not to know that the law hangs for murder. I did not think of it at the time, or I should not have done it.'

"We think that his statement that he killed Miss Goodwin to repossess himself of her as his property was an afterthought, adopted to justify his crime. He acknowledged to us that he had come to this opinion after the deed was done.

"The supposition that he killed Miss Goodwin under the influence of the opinion that in so doing he was repossessing himself of her as his property is inconsistent with his own repeated statement to us that, without forethought of any kind, he killed her under the influence of sudden impulse.

"He explained to us that by killing Miss Goodwin to repossess himself of her as his property, he simply meant that he took her out of the hands of his enemies, and placed her in a position where she would wait, and where he would rejoin her when he died.

"The prisoner endeavoured to represent the catastrophe to us as due to the influence of sudden impulse, but the details which we elicited from him show that he used threats of murder for some time before he struck the first blow. We think that his clear memory of the events attending the crime, and also the attempts which he has made to misrepresent the state of his mind and memory at the time of these events, are evidence of his sanity.

"We are of opinion that he does not entertain any delusions on the subject of a conspiracy against him, but that he uses the term conspiracy to express the real opposition which he has met with from the members of Miss Goodwin's family to his engagement with her, and also to express the feeling that they are hostile to him.

"We have considered the evidence of hereditary predisposition to insanity given in the papers supplied to us, and our opinion of the prisoner's state of mind has not been altered thereby.

"We examined the apothecary and also the chief attendant of Bethlehem as to the conduct of Townley since he has been in detention at the hospital—both of them have had him under daily and special observation—and they assure us that neither in conduct, manner, or conversation had they been able to observe in him any of the peculiarities which they are in the habit of remarking among the insane.

"W. CHARLES HOOD, M.D., Visitor of Chancery Lunatics.
"JOHN CHARLES BUCKNILL, M.D., Visitor of Chancery Lunatics.
"JOHN MEYER, M.D., Medical Superintendent of the Criminal Lunatic Asylum.
"W. HELPS, M.D., Medical Superintendent of the Royal Bethlehem Hospital."

But by far the most interesting document of all is the following statement by George Victor Townley himself—a summary of his answers to the Commissioners—expressing his own view of the crime and his justification of it:

"What have I been guilty of? I am guilty of nothing. I don't admit I am guilty of anything. I don't believe that I have done any harm. Bessie Goodwin was my property, and I had right to do what I did because she was false to me. I was not myself when I did it. I might have been mad at that moment. I am quite sane now.

"I have done her no harm. She is better where she is than if she had lived. I believe there is a future state. I am waiting to go to her. I shall be too happy to join her. They set her against me. She was my property. I saw her, and took away what belonged to me; what else could I do? I think that she in the same circumstances would have had an equal right to do the same.

"I consider that a man has a right to kill his wife if she is an adulteress; I think Bessie Goodwin was guilty of adultery in engaging herself to another. She was as much my property as if we had been married. I look upon marriage as a mere ceremony.

"I never thought deeply on religion. I did not give religion any thought. I am not troubled at the thought of being punished. Why should I be punished? There is no reason for it.

"The results of the trial are nothing to me. I know what was pleaded for me. I could not have pleaded guilty, because I was not guilty of anything.

"If they take my life, it is because they have the power to do it. I took hers because it belonged to me. Their right is that of might; mine is the right of a possessor to recover possession of his property.

"Other men think and act differently, because their temperaments and circumstances are different. A man who has a particular temper, and finds himself in circumstances that compel him to act as I did, is not accountable. Other people might not act as I did. The fact that I acted as I have done is a proof that a man is not accountable in those circumstances.

"I am not sorry for the parents of Bessie Goodwin, or for any of those who brought me to this. I only prevented them from taking what was mine; I only took what belonged to me. She is now waiting for me. I shall join her in a short time.

"The persons who combined to take her from me were no friends of mine; they were always my enemies. They had a personal enmity to me. I do not think they would combine to take my life. But they did combine to injure me in the most tender part by taking her away.

"I have done nothing but what is right and proper. I cannot alter these opinions. You will see that I will die with them. I have no positive hope that my life will be spared. I have always looked at the worst side. I only pray to God that I might die at this minute, as I sit here, and then it would all be finished.

"Before I committed the murder I tried to get her to say the name of the man who had replaced me, but she would not. I never mentioned B. to her then, because I did not, from what she had written to me, once think of him. I certainly used no threats before I stabbed her. But I don't remember anything at the very last."

The Home Secretary, upon receiving the report of the four medical commissioners, forthwith announced that the capital sentence on Townley would be commuted to one of penal servitude for life.

This announcement provoked an extraordinary outburst of public feeling. For weeks a fierce controversy raged in the newspapers between those who indignantly denounced the Home Secretary's decision as palpably unjust and those who upheld the theory of insanity. But by far the stronger feeling was one of indignation at what thousands believed to be a gross miscarriage of justice. If Townley had been a poor man, without influential relatives and friends, he would, so the assailants of the Home Secretary averred, undoubtedly have been hanged. In their view, the theory of insanity had been carried to an extreme which was not only absurd, but dangerous. It was pointed out that in the case of a youth in Kent, who, a few months previously, had murdered a boy with no other motive than the wish to be hanged, the plea of insanity had been rejected, and the murderer had been executed. Yet surely, it was urged, this lad, for he was little more, whose excuse for murder was that he had a craving to go through the experience of being hanged, showed far greater symptoms of insanity than Townley, whose friends had succeeded in saving him from the gallows. It was, they asserted, a mere ordinary case of murder, with jealousy—a jilted lover's jealousy—as its motive; and if jealousy was held to be a proof of insanity, sufficient to render a man not legally responsible for his acts, every jilted lover might murder his sweetheart with impunity. Hundreds of men who had committed murder from motives similar to that of Townley had been hanged, and no protest had been made against their suffering the due penalty of their crimes. Why, then, should an exception be made in the case of Townley? There was no evidence worth a moment's consideration to show that Townley was insane at the time he committed the murder, whatever he might have been after the commission of the crime. And if the man were sane when he did the deed, he ought to suffer the just penalty of his offence—death.

On the other hand, in defence of the Home Secretary's action, it was contended that, independently of the witnesses

PLUNGED HEAD FOREMOST ON THE STONE FLOOR.

examined at the trial, sixteen persons, qualified to judge and wholly unconnected with the prisoner, deposed without hesitation or reserve to Townley's insanity prior to his removal from Derby Gaol to Bethlehem Hospital. It was proved that Townley's grandmother had a brother of whose ten children five were insane, and another brother one of whose children was insane, whilst his grandfather had a sister who committed suicide, and a first cousin who died in a lunatic asylum. These cases showed beyond doubt that there was an hereditary taint of madness in the family. Against that argument, however, it was pointed out that the murder was the only act in Townley's whole life which could by any ingenuity be twisted into a symptom of insanity. Previously to that he had never betrayed the slighest trace of mental disease, and there had been no suspicion of his perfect sanity, until in desperation his friends clutched desperately at the suggestion in the forlorn hope of sparing him and themselves the ignominy of a felon's death.

Baron Martin's share in procuring the respite which led to the final reprieve was also hotly criticised. Why, people asked, did he in passing sentence assert that he entirely concurred in the verdict of the jury, when his letter, written the next day to Sir George Grey, showed that he did not really concur in that verdict? But these good people were not aware that a judge's expression of concurrence with a verdict is merely a statement to the effect that the jury have found strictly in accordance with the balance of the weight of evidence adduced. Still, after his lucid exposition of the legal theory of insanity in his summing-up, it does seem somewhat strange that Baron Martin should, in defiance and contradiction of his own definition of what the law regards as insanity, have deferred to the evidence of Dr. Forbes Winslow and Dr. Gisborne. But for that letter, the Home Secretary would probably have taken no action. The cleverness of the prisoner's solicitor, however, forced his hand. It was an extremely clever stroke on the part of the prisoner's legal representative to take advantage of the Act of Parliament enabling them to procure that certificate. But for this swift and sudden surprise sprung upon him, the Home Secretary would, without doubt, have let the law take its course. It placed him in a dilemma, from which he could only escape by granting a reprieve, with its inevitable sequel—commutation of the death-sentence. The solicitor for the prisoner, in short, pulled his client out of the fire by a bit of sharp, but perfectly legitimate, practice.

Gradually the excitement over the Townley case died out, and the memory of it had faded from the minds of most people, when a twelvemonth later it was recalled to them by the startling announcement in the newspapers of Monday, February 13, 1865, that George Victor Townley had committed suicide in Pentonville Prison on the previous evening.

The inquest brought to light the following facts: Townley had been set to the trade of shoemaking, and there was nothing in his conduct as a prisoner to indicate insanity, suicidal or otherwise. The chaplain, who saw him often, always found him perfectly rational, except on one point—he always persisted in denying that the murder he had committed was a sin. A crime against the laws of the land he admitted it to be, but otherwise a perfectly justifiable and even righteous act. Apart from this, he never showed the least symptom of insanity or even eccentricity. His letters to his mother were bright, cheery, often amusing, always sensible.

At the close of the sermon in the chapel on the afternoon of Sunday, February 12, 1865, the convict who always occupied the seat next to Townley in chapel noticed, to his surprise, that his neighbour, whom he had never known to open his lips in chapel before, sang the last two verses of the concluding hymn in a particularly loud voice and with marked expression.

These are the well-known words:

"I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless,
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is Death's sting? Where, Grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

"Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes,
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

He closed the book sharply as his voice joined in the last amen, and clasping it tightly in his hand, filed with the rest out of the chapel.

Suddenly there was a shout of alarm, followed by a dull, sickening thud. Townley had thrown himself, as bathers dive, clean over the railings of the circular gallery, and plunged head foremost on to the stone floor three-and-twenty feet below. He was still breathing when they picked him up, and though his skull was fearfully fractured, he lingered for an hour unconscious before he died.

The surgeon's evidence at the inquest revealed the extraordinary fact that there were marks on Townley's arms which showed that he must have punctured the veins within a few hours of his death, and, indeed, on examination, his hammock and blankets were found to be stained with blood. The intention of suicide must, therefore, have been in his mind all that day. Yet the strange thing was that in his occupation of shoemaking he always had a sharp knife by his side with which he might at any moment have killed himself. Perhaps the thought that it was a knife he had slain his betrothed with deterred him from taking his life in that way, or possibly the suicidal impulse never came to him till that Sunday morning when the weapon was no longer at hand.

So by his own act George Victor Townley was held to have solved the problem of his sanity or insanity. That there was a strain of madness in him from his birth I do not doubt. It was visible in the form of marked eccentricity, to use no stronger phrase, in other members of his family on the maternal side. But the taint might never have shown itself to any marked degree had not the shock produced by the abrupt severance of his engagement, and the keen mental anguish which followed, drawn to a head all that was abnormal and diseased in his mental and moral temperament. Since his time the study of mental disease has made vast strides, and the influence of hereditary taint as a cause of crime has received profound and scientific recognition. In consequence, the legal theory of insanity, so far as it renders a man not criminally responsible for his actions, has been largely widened. Nevertheless, I am by no means sure that any man who committed a murder now under the circumstances, and with the avowed motive which characterised the crime of Townley, would escape the gallows so fortunately as he did.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

George the Second.

THE inequality of many of the English laws of those days was so strong in the mind of George II. that, except in cases of murder, he would never sign a death-warrant without betraying every symptom of reluctance and displeasure, twirling his hat, and walking in apparent anger round the chamber, and condemning in atrocious English the severity of the English laws.

Drink.

CUTTING off the ears was a legal punishment in France after the reign of Louis XII., and was generally inflicted upon incorrigible drunkards.

In Russia everyone found intoxicated in the public thoroughfares is imprisoned, and when he is sober again he is set to sweep the streets for a day.

Heredity is responsible for 60 per cent. of confirmed inebriates. Ten per cent. are due to brain and nerve exhaustion; and in 5 per cent. defective sanitation or unsuitable food is responsible; while in many cases the causes are combined.

Replies to Queries

KHAMSKATCAN (sic).—You evidently refer to Josiah Crisp, hanged for murder in 1803. We shall give particulars of the "Newmarket Heath" crime.

ASHPLANT.—After much research we find that a George Anthony Still was hanged for forgery at the Old Bailey in 1809. Is this the case you mean?

ALIX LUKOS.—Why not do a "Road to Ruin" scena, à la Thurtell, from "Gambling Den to Gallows" sort of thing? Our story of his crime will give you all the data.

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